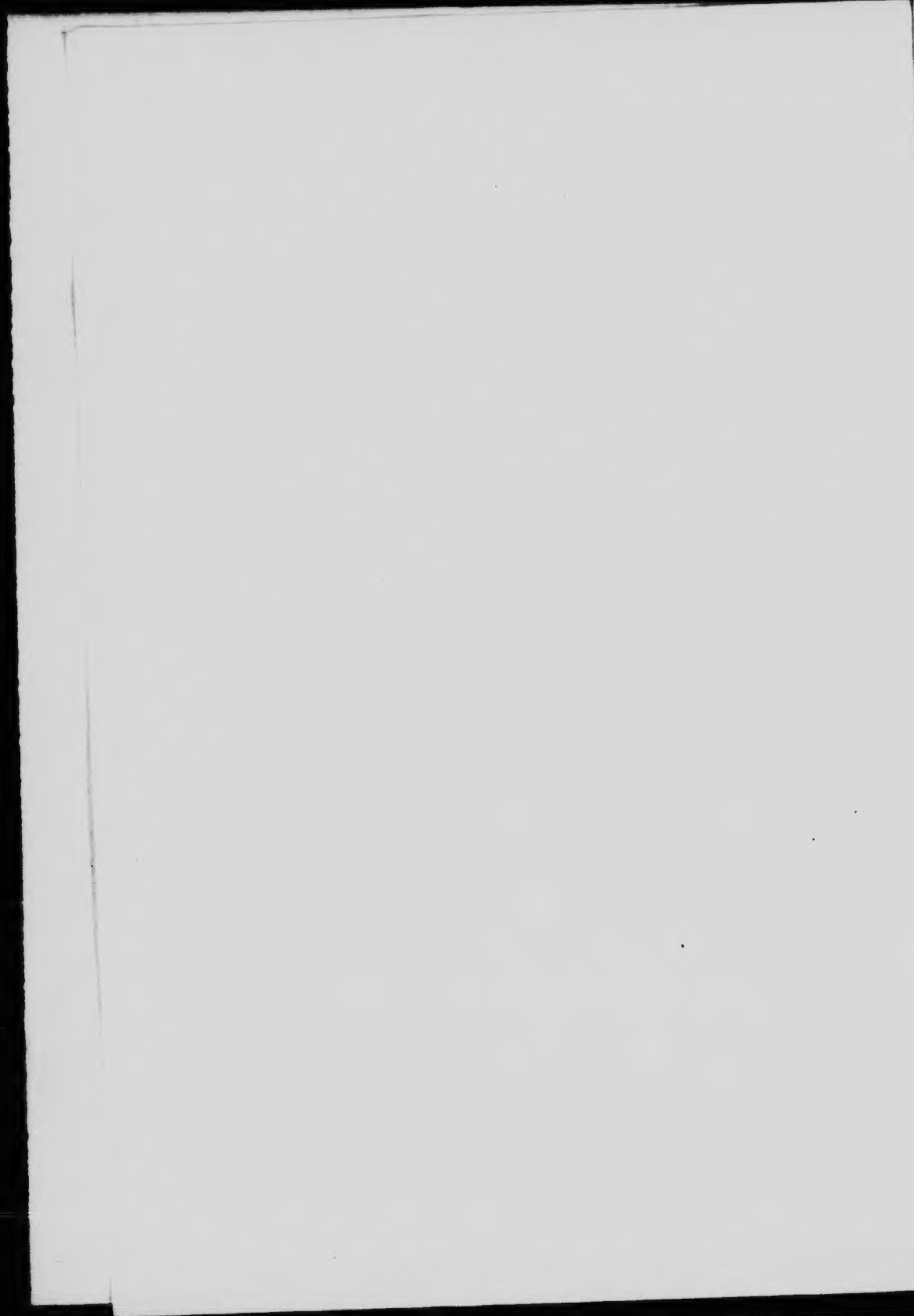
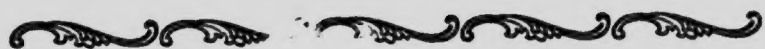
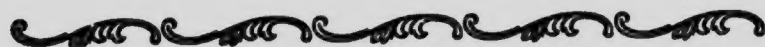






R E U R N

A Story of the Sea Islands in 1739





*"THE SEA LAY OUT
THERE." (See page 313)*

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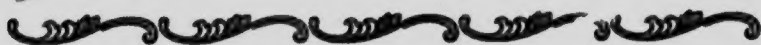
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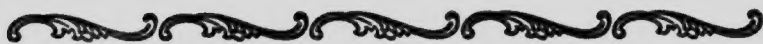
R E T U R N



A S T O R Y O F T H E S E A I S L A N D S I N 1739

By
ALICE MACGOWAN
AND
GRACE MACGOWAN COOKE
Authors of "The Last Word," etc.

ILLUSTRATED BY
C. D. WILLIAMS



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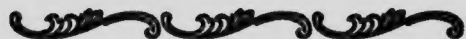
Published March, 1905

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T^O JOHN ENCILL MACGOWAN
THROUGH WHOSE FORBEARS
THE AUTHORS OF THIS BOOK
TRACE BACK TO THE COUNTRY-
MEN OF THOSE WHO FOUGHT
WITH TARGE AND CLAYMORE FOR
THE GATEWAY OF GEORGIA'S SEA
ISLANDS





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I.



THE BOOK OF GOING FORTH





R E T U R N

CHAPTER I.

AT THE STEPS OF THE ALTAR

"WHITHER wilt thou betake thee
O my false lover?
I shall flee my country,
None may me discover.
O cruel, and cruel as fair;
Long may you look for me — or look
for me never!"

"**P**RAY — pray — pray do not let the carriage
stop! Stay the man out there in the street!"
"My lord, 'tis too late — 'tis past praying
— they are here."

The carriage, a lumbering old vehicle, drawn by two magnificent horses and driven by a liveried Indian coachman, had come to a stop at the curb. The negro outriders reined backward, the negro footman sprang from the rumble, opened the coach door, and a tall, majestic girl in bridal robes leaned forward and looked out.

There was a crowd about the doorway of St.

Philip's, and the bride showed by just the faintest lowering of the haughty lids, and just the merest something added to the pride of her bearing, that she was aware of the attention she attracted, the admiration she commanded.

The gentleman who had first spoken wrung his hands.

"For all the world to see! For all the world to see!" he moaned. "Oh, my poor Diana!"

There was plainly a relationship between the two. The man was tall and elegant also, with the same peculiar aristocratic delicacy of hands and feet, of head and bearing, which marked the girl; but there was something supine in his refinement, something feeble in his elegance, which was strangely contradicted in her more virile bearing.

Two other coaches now drew up behind the first. There was a surging forward in the crowd upon the sidewalk, and friends came out to receive the bridesmaids. Only the bride, since her uncle still hung back and whimpered, was left ungreeted. Her challenging glance sought him out in the crowd, and the man who had once before prompted him pushed him forward with a whisper, "You must e'en see it through, Sir Paris; 'tis no time to palter."

Sir Paris removed from his powdered ringlets the three-cornered hat, set it against his hip with little finger genteelly cocked in air, and, mincing forward with any but a holiday face, bowed low and offered his arm.

When he would have led the girl in the direction of the vestry, she halted him. "What is toward?" she demanded, head up, eyes full of anger.

"Come with me, my niece," urged her relative,

in a sort of strangled whisper. "I will explain, — I can explain, — but not here before all these people."

It was more than a hundred and fifty years ago in the wealthy and elegant colonial city of Charles Town, South Carolina. The wedding was that of Diana Chaters, a belle and a beauty, who for years had queened it in the rich, aristocratic, and peculiarly exclusive society of Charles Town, which was nearing the height of its provincial glory.

An orphaned heiress, proud, insolent, overbearing, she gloried in the name of the cruelest jilt, the most heartless coquette, of all the region round. To-day she was to wed a Scotchman who claimed kin with the semi-royal house of Argyle, Archie Cameron, a man double her years, and with a record of gallantries to daunt any woman.

He had brought to Charles Town letters to prominent families, a pocketful of money, and a bearing the most debonair; had played high and lost cheerfully, drunk deep and carried his liquor easily; and was hero of one or two tales which were told in clubs and tap-rooms, and of which expurgated versions were retailed to the more indulgent wives.

In short, he showed himself a man of fashion according to the eighteenth century standard — and a bold, dashing blade as well.

The wooing had proceeded with unseemly haste. Those who would have warned and counselled Diana — good women — ladies — held aloof. Just three times had Cameron met her when the proposal was made and accepted.

The man claimed that he was going on a brief trip to the Georgia colony below, yet he urged an

early date for the wedding, with which this statement ill agreed, promising to be surely back in Charles Town in good season. And upon this assurance the headstrong girl had carried forward her wedding preparations.

Now, half-way to the vestry door, Diana pulled her hand from her uncle's arm. "Why should I go in there?" she inquired. "A bride does not creep into the rear of the church. 'Tis not seemly."

But her uncle, whose legs were giving under him, pleaded earnestly, "O, come, sweet Diana, I pray you — will nobody lend me a smelling-salts? There — ah! that is better!" And he more hung upon the arm of the tall, upright bride than she on his.

Once inside the little vestry, and the door shut, Sir Paris looked about him, at the bride's angry questioning countenance, at the malicious, sneering faces of her bridesmaids (she had made deliberate choice of those girls who had been her greatest rivals — friends she had not); he looked on these, and to the minister waiting in his vestments — and burst into weak tears.

"Oh, I cannot tell her!" he protested. "'Tis a task too bitter."

The bride's wrathful eyes interrogated him. She caught him by the shoulder and shook him. He faltered out, "Archie Cameron hath not come."

"And is that all!" she cried, her voice full of relief, yet vibrant with scorn of his weakness. "Why said ye not so at the first?" Then, after an instant's pause and a glance at the mute faces surrounding her, she exclaimed, with resentful impatience, "Why, he lay at Colonel Brueton's, on the

Island, whence I had word from him o' yesterday that neither wind nor tide need be reckoned in the matter of his coming, for that he would swim the sound, liefer than not be in Charles Town this morning — this day. What more like than that he hath been delayed on the treacherous passage from the Island? No need to put yourself in a taking — he will be here."

"Nay," whimpered her uncle. "Oh, fan me, somebody! Revive me — I faint — I perish! He hath come to Charles Town, my sweet niece. He is even now at a tavern, where he — where he —"

"Aye, my negress, Juno, thought she saw from an attic window the boat come in, the party disembark and go up to the King's Arms. He will be here shortly." And again, divided between anger and apprehension, she looked on the silent faces about her.

Now the unfortunate Sir Paris (who possessed, as he conceived, the prettiest taste in the world in matters of arrangement and decoration) had recklessly indulged himself in the untoward activity of going to the church betimes, to see that the last touches were properly bestowed, had placed himself thereby in the forefront of the wretched battle, and received in his devoted bosom the discharge from its first gun — a letter from Archie Cameron sent to the church. The document was borne open in the hand of a tipsy, leering pot-boy who, whether through his own ingenuity or the cruel inhumanity of those who sent him, was plainly master of the paper's import.

It was this communication, and the wanton brutality of its delivery, which had set Sir Paris twittering

from vestry to porch, wringing his hands, till it was too late to go up to the mansion-house, thus leaving the bride to come alone to the church in her great coach. And now (with all this seething in his mind) Diana's boasting of Cameron's devotion was upon her uncle's ear as hot iron upon raw flesh.

"O, yes, he is at the King's Arms," the be-devilled Sir Paris faltered, (Diana heaved a great sigh of relief,) "but he sends you, from there, such message — such word as — as I cannot repeat to you."

"What —" began Diana, in a tone of exasperation. Then, catching sight of a paper thrust anyway into his embroidered satin waistcoat, among overflowing lace ruffles, she snatched it out and, silencing his piteous protests with a gesture, devoured the letter with burning eyes. She read:—

"I am told that for Years you have made it your cruell Boast to refuse, and scornfully reject and hold up to ridicule Honourable Gentⁿ, who were at every point your Betters.

"The talk is now that you are in the mind to wed — to allye yourself with One who claims to be neather better nor worse than those his Fellowes whom you mispryzed and jeered and flouted.

"You are in the mind to wed? Do soe by all Means, my Layde. Methinks matrimonie might be a cure for One so curst; but haveing no fancy to try the taming of a shrew more bitter than Petruccio's Kate, I give you my best Wishes and — good-bye.

"If any man will have you hereafter, wed whom you will.

"'Twill certainly not be,

" My Layde,

" With profound resp^t,

" Your Ladyship's most obed^t and obleeged

" Humble serv^t to command (in all else),

" ARCHIBALD CAMERON."

Diana's blazing eyes were raised from perusal of this amazing brief to rest upon her trembling uncle, where he stood quailing in anticipation, the tittering bridesmaids behind him.

"And he is in Charles Town!" she cried, in the fullest tone of her deep voice. "This hound — this coward and liar!" She levelled her finger at Sir Paris as though she pointed a weapon. "You are here — you stay here — to tell me that he is in Charles Town, that he has sent me messages of scorn — and that he lives! That he lives to do this thing to Diana Chaters?"

She turned, with both her clenched hands raised, stood so for a moment, then with a great cry, flung herself down upon a seat and panted:

"'Tis because I have no man kin to me, that this shame hath been put upon me! And there was none to strike for me — none — none — none!"

She hung so a moment, sobbing, and then the voice of her first bridesmaid penetrated her disarray.

"La!" quoth that thrifty damsel, who bore in her little mind many an unappeased grudge against the haughty Diana, "'twas scarce worth while to buy a flowered paduasoy and taffety petticoat — and new lace points, too — for such mischance as this."

And the other shrilled after her, "Fine work!"

All our learning of how to enter the church — and how to present the bride with prayer-book — to receive her glove — when there comes no bridegroom!”

The words stung poor Diana to action. She rose up with eyes of fury. “Wear your paduasoy where you will, Mistress Thankful Partridge!” she sneered. “You will ever look yellow as a lemon in it. For waiting on Diana Chaters, Mistress Sally Pryber, whether as bridesmaid or serving woman, ’tis an up-come for you. I will go home,” and she made toward a door which led into the church. “Uncle, your arm,” she ordered. “I leave these fools to do as pleases them best. My carriages and servants are at their behest; not myself. I will go home.”

Sir Paris caught at her draperies and held her back. “Not that way,” he whispered; “not through the church — before them all.”

“Why not that way?” demanded Diana, fiercely. “Think you I am ashamed to show my face, because a man hath played the blackguard? Nay, I’ll go this way or none.” And hastening ahead of the trembling rector and the two bridesmaids, who hoped for further sensational developments, she chose the nearer of two doors, laid her hand upon its knob and, amid a sudden outcry of expostulation from those behind her, turned it and pushed blindly through. This door led directly to the altar enclosure.

That no grandeur might be lacking at the wedding of this fortunate young heiress and beauty, it had fallen that there was in Charles Town a bishop from Virginia, of beautiful and venerable aspect,

whom Sir Paris had declared would add as greatly to the artistic value of the ceremony as he would to its ecclesiastical dignity.

Now Diana saw before her, for one dizzying instant, the altar lights, the bishop kneeling with his back to the congregation, his head bowed in prayer. The sight held her for a moment, and during that time the rector, despairing of any attempt to recall her, and supposing that the bishop would quiet and bring her back, pushed the three others before him toward that vestry door which led directly into the body of the church. From this door descended several broad, shallow steps, and upon the uppermost the three paused.

The church was the old historic St. Philip, afterward burned, in which Whitefield preached, where he was, later, tried, and which his biographer calls "a grand pile, resembling one of the new churches in London." Half hidden by some decorations which Sir Paris had put in place, the bride looked down upon those guests who had come to see her married, and who were now to see her publicly jilted. It was an assemblage such as no daylight — nor perhaps even lamplight — could show to the present times. The powdered hair and gay brocades of both men and women, the profusion of jewels, were such as nothing but a masquerade or carnival reproduces now.

Always a pet and favourite colony of the English crown, Carolina had lived in peace and waxed fat upon the commerce of the West Indies. Her people were noted for their elegance, the boundless hospitality which they extended to guests, and the exclusive and jealous eye with which they held their

society high above the reach of vulgar newcomers. Cut off by distance from Virginia above, and by war from the Spaniards below, this province was from the first a little realm of its own, which evolved a society unmatched in the new world. And here was all the elegance, beauty, and fashion of the Charles Town of 1739, gathered in St. Philip's to see Diana Chaters married to Archibald Cameron.

As, startled and shrinking back, Diana looked out upon it, there rose and spread over the congregation a whisper of unseemly laughter. It is but justice to say that the mirth was not a comment upon her plight, — it was not known nor had she as yet been observed, — but a joyous, spontaneous tribute to the appearance of Sir Paris. That worthy gentleman, whose years were beginning to steal his roses, was accustomed to rouge himself. Now, having wept and mopped his eyes and wept again, the smears of red upon his countenance would have shamed a clown in a pantomime.

The bishop rose in surprise and came a step nearer the trembling girl. She put out a hand, never taking her eyes from the sea of curious, impertinent, hostile faces before her, and whispered to him, "Say there will be no wedding here to-day. Disperse them — oh, the fools! — disperse them, I pray you!" and her voice rose a little, with the last words, above the opening whisper.

The sneering, amused faces, at this sound, turned all their prying eyes upon her, and to the smiles were added whisperings and nudgings. Diana's courage, which any kindness would have melted, rose up to meet their seeming insolence. They tittered, did they? They laughed at her open sham-



"*A* MERRY SIGHT, MY GOOD PEOPLE,
TO SEE A MAID SCORNE!"



ing, as at the tumble of a yokel into a gutter. She would rather the men had struck at her, the women cried epithets and pointed fingers.

For one instant she leaned, clutching the drapery which had concealed her, roving a furious and desolate gaze over that press of brocades and gems and gem-like eyes, as though she sought for ruth or pity which there might be in that multitude for her. The fierce invective with which she would later meet their scorn waited, hung for a moment, as hangs an avalanche, before that last tiny rootlet which stays its reckless course gives way, and it sweeps roaring to the valley. Then she cried:

"A merry sight, my good people, to see a maid scorned! And one who hath held her head high — whom ye have many a time envied!"

"Hush, oh, hush, my daughter!" begged the old bishop, his hand upon her arm, horrified when her woman's voice went ringing through the sacred arches. "'Tis not meet that a woman speak in the church. Let me —"

As though his words had wrought her to greater rage, she sprang to the altar steps, and stood there glaring at her wedding guests. Mere words ceased to be sufficient to express her fury. Draping the mighty structure of powdered hair upon her head was a bridal veil of Flanders lace, a well-nigh priceless web of rich and intricate design cunningly wrought by the patient hands of Flemish women. It had veiled beautiful Polly Antrobus for her wedding with Sir Hector Chaters. Now Diana reached up in speechless fury and, with a sudden gesture which brought the pile of curls and tresses about her white

face, plucked it off, and casting it before her, fiercely trampled it. She found voice again.

"I pray to God," she cried, "that your daughters may come to such shame as this — and worse — aye, hear ye? worse!"

She was going on with Heaven knows what wild words, when a woman who had been passing the door, a young and beautiful woman, but in the coarse garb of a peasant, the ornamentation of which suggested Indian work, turned, attracted by the unbridled tongues, asked and was told the meaning of such to-do, then came swiftly up the aisle and caught Diana in her arms.

"Get her from here!" she cried, in full, mellow tones to Sir Paris, whose face of misery identified him with the raging girl. "If you be a man, help me to carry her. Do you no see she's swounded? Why, the poor thing was mad! Mad with the shame and pain of it! There! There!" as Diana stirred on her shoulder and sobbed. And she led the poor bride out between the wondering people, repelling all offers of assistance, flinging a black look or even an oath now and then to those who pressed toward her to address or look upon Diana in her pitiful plight.

Near the doorway, they came to a sort of deadlock in the crowd. A thin, high-shouldered young beau in a suit of puce silk and fine lace ruffles pushed hastily forward, negligent of everything but to peer into the face hidden upon the rescuer's breast. Thrusting his narrow visage obliquely at the two, "Has the bride fainted?" he inquired, with mock solicitude.

The girl's right arm was about Diana's shudder-

ing, shrinking form; but her left hand shot out and lit with a resounding smack upon the gentleman's cheek.

"Take that for your impudence!" she cried.

"I warrant me he'll need no rouge o' that side his face," tittered some one in the crowd.

"Let him bring his impudent mug back here spying and prying," the young Amazon muttered, "and I'll paint t'other cheek as good a red."

Sir Paris had found it convenient to travel in the wake of the two women. Once out in the sunlight, the girl spoke to him.

"Here, old man," she urged, "if you be a man at all, and not an auld wife in breeches, get the carriage around for us — 'tis o' the further side."

Sir Paris tottered away, addressing himself to his smelling-bottle, wiping his eyes with his lace handkerchief, and murmuring, "Oh, alas, the heavy day, the heavy day!"

They stood awaiting the coach. Diana turned and looked into the face near hers. "Who are you?" she began, in a monotonous tone, "You that have dared to show kindness to Diana Chaters this day. Look to the steps there. See the sneering crowd. You are sadly in the minority — poor fool!"

"I am old Dad Buckaloo's girl, Lit; and for being a fool, it runs in the family," answered the newcomer, as the coach drew up before them.

The church porch was fast filling with people, many of whom were staring, laughing, putting up quizzing glasses, as though at a play or a show — and among these the quondam bridesmaids led. Any who would have been kind — and there was

no lack of such in that high-bred, warm-hearted society of Charles Town — were withheld by their own acquaintance with Diana's temper, or by the mere reputation of it. They simply withdrew. Those in evidence were the froward and unfeeling (that element of fashionable society of which no period can claim a monopoly) who would reckon a sight like this a little better amusement than a bear-baiting or the public pillorying of some unlucky offender.

The smiles with which his usually stolid coachman had received him were attributed on Sir Paris's part to the story of Diana's jilting being already known to the man. But when their ally, having placed her fainting charge upon the carriage seat, faced him, she burst into a mellow peal of laughter about which there was no mistake.

"Good lack, man!" she gasped. "Your face, your face! 'Tis smeared with red like a Chickasaw's on the war-path — 'tis worse than a mummer's at Christmas time!"

Then, with a return to that fluent good nature, that easy kindness which was the basis of her character, she drew a kerchief from her bosom, wetted it from Sir Paris's essence bottle, and scrubbed his cheeks, he standing with the pitiful air of a small child undergoing toilet, to the manifest and expressed delight of the crowd in the porch, which began now to dispart itself, and quitting the place in groups of two and three, to pass close by the coach step, with insolent, examining looks.

"There, now," she observed, finally, bundling him into the coach, "you look quite tidy and respectable. Go home, old gentleman, and keep some

heart in you. The poor soul there needs it. Though, for the matter of that, if you be indeed an auld wife in breeches, methinks she is a warrior in petticoats."

For Diana, having recovered from her swoon, was sitting rigidly erect, putting back her dishevelled hair, fronting without a quiver the daylight and those who would have looked upon her uncovered face. And the last sight Lit had of them as the coach drove away, was of Sir Paris holding his head between his hands, while Diana touched him on the shoulder and fiercely bade him, "For God's sake, sit up and be a man!"

CHAPTER II.

WHERE BLADES DO BRAG

"SHE's brewed the maut, she's ca'd the priest,
She's trimmed her bower, bot an' her ha';
She's bidden in the wedding guests,
But her fause love, he's up an' awa."

AS the great coach lumbered away, the girl who had given her name as Lit Buckaloo bent and picked up from the ground a shining something at which she gazed round-eyed for a moment, then glanced after the departing vehicle and made as though she would have pursued it. Seeing that it was too far on its way for her to hope to overtake the man even by running, she looked again at her find, whistled, and thrust it into the bosom of her coarse stuff gown with just the motion a careless man makes in tucking some trifle into a waistcoat pocket.

"She'll not be thinking of baubles like this," Lit muttered. "It will be some time before my lady would miss a thing of the sort; and I must e'en go and get Dad's errand done. I have dallied too long already. I will seek her to-night. By that time she will be lowest in her mind — poor soul — and need some one to chirk her up a bit."

With this philosophical review of the situation,

the girl would have addressed herself to her own affairs, but that, at the moment, her ear and eye were both arrested by the tones and action of a gentleman who, standing on the steps of St. Philip's, rehearsed to a group of acquaintances the whole story of the defeated wedding, adding thereto — evidently from his own personal knowledge — a history of the precedent occurrences which explained it all.

The speaker was he who had prompted and remonstrated with Sir Paris; and as Lit, standing apart, listened to his setting forth of the whole matter along with the many comments and sneers, the utterances of heartless satisfaction, the proffers of more insulting pity, her big, thick-fringed, doe-like eyes swam, and her shapely brown hands clenched hard. "Quality! They're but so many devils!" she muttered, and moved hastily away.

Late that afternoon, having concluded her father's errand, which was the obtaining of a packet of indigo seed from the Lucas plantation on the Wappoo, she walked alone toward the Boar's Head, her father, and her supper. In the waning light of fast approaching dusk, she received and returned an ironical bow from the gentleman whose face she had slapped in the church; and so well did her appearance and manner please him that he followed and accosted her.

"I beg pardon, madam," he began, "may I know to whom I am — to whose delicate hand — I am beholden for a slapped face?"

"Dost want another?" she interrogated, quickly, turning upon the questioner; and a second man of his own class, who approached at the moment, took

him by the arm and drew him aside, saying as he did so, "'Tis old Dad Buckaloo's girl, Lit. Let her be. She has a pretty temper of her own, and can use her fists like a man. Besides, the old Scotchman is quite like to make himself mighty disagreeable, though he is easy enough if you choose to come up on his good side. Come, shall I present you? Will you make the acquaintance in the regular manner?" And arm in arm the two followed Lit to the Boar's Head, an inn much frequented by drovers and Indian traders.

This little low-browed house seemed just now to be the rallying-point of vast festivity, for there made itself heard from the tap-room a great singing, mingled with the clinking of glasses, and the rhythmic pound of heavy-shod feet accompanied by the soft pat-and-shuffle of those unshod. Lit and her two followers stepped inside. A great, black-bearded giant was seated upon the bar, roaring out bits of song, and keeping time with his drinking mug, while on the floor before him an Indian and a Highlandman danced a match, and a dozen or more bystanders looked on or attended to their own concerns.

"Na, na!" he on the bar shouted to his countryman. "You're already beaten. Your wind is gane, you are nigh spent. Opayhatchoo is not touched at all. He could leap like that until dawn. As well gie o'er trying."

This was old Dad Buckaloo, born Buccleugh, and christened Alexander, son of a Scottish laird of no mean pretensions. With the curse of the wanderer on him from his birth, a natural gipsy and breaker of laws, he had knocked about the world since com-

ing to manhood, and, as he told it, had gone down, seventeen or eighteen years before, into the country of the Creeks, where he married him a wife. Certainly, it was thence that he now occasionally emerged with his tall, strong, dark daughter, to do a bit of horse-trading or purchase such supplies as were necessary for his very primitive mode of life.

Lit now went forward and put Miss Lucas's letter in her father's hand, which diverted him for a moment from the dancers. Mastering its contents and pushing it into his pocket, he once more addressed himself to the saltations of his Indian friend and his countryman.

"They ha' been dancin' this twa hours; and Donny, the fule, will nae gie up," he appealed to the newcomers.

Donny's legs, it appeared, however, were not of the opinion of his head; for these incontinently failing him at this instant, he sank down prone and groaning. Old Buckaloo burst into a great roar of laughter, in which the two gentlemen joined. But Lit, with a concerned face, helped the spent and panting Donny to a seat.

"You ever take pleasure in some cruel sport, Dad," she reproached her father. "Nothing but something that hurts somebody else can make you merry."

Buckaloo laughed again at the accusation, and bade the company in the room to come and drink with him.

"This is an odd fish," remarked Captain Tillsford, the gentleman of the slapped face, to his companion, "an odd fish, Fallowfield."

"Mr. Buccleugh, I believe," Major Fallowfield remarked, as he raised his glass.

The formal words appealed to something which was generally in abeyance in old Dad. "Alexander Buccleugh, at your service," he repeated, with a grand flourishing bow.

"I met you last year, sir, at Savannah," Major Fallowfield went on. "You have a plantation somewhere below on the Sea Islands, have you not?"

"O, yes, I have a plantation or so on Wissoo — you English have called it Cumberland Island — and I was in Savannah a good deal last year. My headquarters is down in the Creek country, on the St. Mary's. 'Tis not far from the river Alata, that which the Spaniards have named St. John's — 'tis the boundary between the lands of the Indians and the Spanish."

"We met your daughter," Captain Tillsford hinted, "at a wedding at St. Philip's."

"A wedding?" inquired Buckaloo, with raised brows.

"Well, not exactly a wedding," smiled Fallowfield.

"'Twas the cruelest dog's trick," broke in Lit, "the sort of trick that a man will ever be trying to compass, and other men be ready to admire," and she scowled at Tillsford, who smiled and bowed as though to a compliment.

"What was it, then, if not exactly a wedding?" inquired Buckaloo.

"Why, 'twas like this," began Tillsford; "we have in our society here a very noted beauty, Mistress Diana Chaters, the orphan heiress of Sir Hector Chaters, and the most heartless little hussy

that ever cozened an honest man for the sake of jilting him. She numbers her victims by the score, and boasts of them as a Chickasaw brave boasts of his scalps."

"'Tis an easy guess at one scalp she has taken," laughed Lit, looking at his flushed, angry face.

"I say she deserved it, I say she was well served," went on Tillsford, boisterously.

"Deserved what?" inquired his host, who still sat upon the bar, and occasionally applied to the drawer behind the counter the mug might be filled.

"Why, Archibald Cameron, who is a pretty fellow and hath a very taking way with a woman, made a wager when he first came to Charles Town, and before he had met the jilt, that he would propose marriage to her, be accepted, and jilt her in turn openly, at the altar, within four weeks of their first meeting. And, by heaven, he did it, too! That was the thing which chanced to-day, and which I have said was a wedding, and yet not quite a wedding."

Buckaloo laughed, and ordered drinks around again. "'Tis a brave tale," he declared. "And now what are the men of her family about, and who is to settle with the fellow?"

"You may be sure," Lit again broke in, "that a hound like that knew well there was no man to fight for her, before he put such a shame upon her. You men are all alike; 'tis a question of fighting, and no thought of the poor maid's heart that's broken."

"Nay, mistress," remonstrated Fallowfield, in a more kindly tone, "the point is that the lady in this

case showed no heart. If the Honourable Diana Chaters has one, and it is a good one, none has so far seen evidence of it."

"And the man?" cried Lit, angrily. "What of him? He showed heart, did he?"

"Why, no," answered Fallowfield, "'tis no question of his heart. He but paid the lady out in her own coin, or such coin as she had used toward others. And — though I would not myself have done the thing — I cannot see that it misbecame him as a man and a gentleman."

"I would you men had all but one neck, that I might wring it," flashed Lit.

"Why, 'tis a classical young damsel who quotes Nero to us," taunted Tillsford in a low voice, and with a wary eye on old Buckaloo, for the moment engaged with Donny.

Lit flushed darkly and bent her black brows dangerously upon him. "I am not acquainted with that person," she retorted. "What I say, I say for myself."

"And I," laughed Fallowfield, "would that all the women had but one neck, and that I had my arm around it. Come, fair mistress, you are much too handsome to be so unkind."

Lit made no answer in words. Turning to Buckaloo, "Was that all you wanted of me, father?" she inquired. "May I go now?"

Buckaloo caught her arm. He was beginning to feel the liquor he had drunk. "No, stay a bit, and tell us something about this young dame you defend so fiercely."

"I know nothing of her," said Lit, "except that

she is a woman and has been cruelly used by a man."

"Which makes her claim upon your sympathies secure, seeing that you have a father who was unkind enough to give you an Indian mother. Well, there be some that cannot appreciate a good ancestry. For my part, I would rather be descended from old Tomo-chi-chi than from the King of England. But 'tis a matter of taste—a matter of taste," and he laughed and released her.

As Lit left the room in quest of a bit of supper, Tillsford spoke again. "You called the heroine of this morning's little 'Measure for Measure' comedy 'The Honourable Diana Chaters,' I believe; and she has as much right to that title as my negress Mopsy, or the first Indian squaw you meet on the street."

"I have often heard her called so," explained Fallowfield.

"Then you have often heard her miscalled," retorted Tillsford. "Her father was a beggarly baronet; and now that he is gone, her uncle, Sir Paris, has the title. I have heard fools call her 'The Lady Diana,' but a baronet's daughter hath no title. One would think her father had been an earl to hear you mouth 'Honourable' before her name."

"Well, her money's her own. She pays the bills and holds the purse strings in that house," interrupted a red-faced butcher who was leaning upon the counter with his mug of ale. "Honourable and well she pays 'em, too. Call her honourable, I say, and why not?"

"Why not?" echoed Tillsford. "Because she

has no right to the title. Money she has, yes. The gold wherewith her common-born mother bought Sir Hector Chaters, her titled dad. O, 'tis a mighty fortune she holds in her fool hands; and there is the only reason why a man of sense would look at her to wed her — for she hath the devil's own temper. No, she hath no title."

Lit had returned, and was eating a good supper in a corner. "Why, that's no so bad, neither," she murmured. "A baronet's daughter, with a mighty fortune to her, and the beautifulest imperial young queen that ever wore a shoe. Methinks that would be enough to dazzle a hatchet-faced lieutenant of militia, with not one coin to rub against another," she observed, genially, to her mug; and the sally was answered by a roar of laughter in which old Buckaloo's voice rang loudest.

When the mirth subsided, an elderly man over in a corner, whom the landlord addressed as Mr. Sparling, spoke up. "Nay, nay, justice for all, my hearties. You may or may not like the daughter, who is certainly curst; and" (with a wink) "she may or may not like you. But the mother was not common born. She died very soon after the family came to the Americas. But I remember well when she was the belle of Bristol town, admired not only for her beauty, but for her wit, and as far exceeded this offspring of hers as the sun exceeds the moon. She was presented at court, and Queen Anne doted upon her, and often invited her. She stooped, man — stooped — to marry Sir Hector. He won her by his dashing ways, not she bought him. 'Twas said he courted her — like Master William Shakespeare's blacka-

moor hero — by a relation of his daring adventures and hairbreadth 'scapes. And, faith, he had 'em, had young Sir Hector Chaters, for he was a bold blade."

"Well," observed Tillsford, biting,ly, "there seems to be rather a pitiful outcome for so notable a pair, — but one descendant, and she so little worthy her parentage."

"Unfair again," declared the old man, stoutly. "This offspring of debonair Sir Hector Chaters, had she but been breeched instead of petticoated, would have been held most worthy. The poor maid has too much blood and spirit for the distaff — she wants a sword."

Upon the heels of an outbreak of laughter, comments, protests, and suggestions from the crowd, the door suddenly burst open as though gunpowder had bidden it, and a young gentleman, very much flushed with wine or laughter, and apparently breathless from running, irrupted into the heart of the company. He paused in the middle of the room, under the fire of many expectant glances, waved something white above his head, and cried out, laughing:

"News, gentlemen, news from the Honourable Mistress Diana Chaters! The latest information for sale for one drink, or as many more as any man choose to offer! Who bids?"

Unwelcome as the words were to her ears, something in the vivid poise of the lithe young figure, the innocent, boyish flash of the big, liquid eyes, and the merry, quizzical turn of the graceful head, took strong hold upon Lit's fancy. There was a roaring chorus of assent, and the young fellow was

borne to the bar by half a dozen enthusiastic bidders for his information.

He sprang lightly upon it, and seated himself beside Dad Buckaloo, who genially resigned his post of honour, and sprawled thereafter upon a settle nearer the fire. Waving an ale mug in each hand, he swept those eloquent eyes about the room to pick up his audience. Finding it, to a man, hanging in a mute ecstasy of expectation upon his words —

“Well, then,” he cried, “’twas thus: I stand — by a blessed, heavenly chance — just before the Chaters mansion when the Honourable Diana (having quarrelled with her bridegroom and sent him to the right about, as I suppose, and having, as I was told, boxed the ears of the priest) comes home to this same mansion in a very still fury. I have ever noticed that these termagants have a way of looking as though they were frozen, up to the last moment, which sees them break loose and carry all before them.”

Here he drank deeply from the right-hand mug, held it back, regarding it questioningly and meditatively, sipped critically at the left-hand jorum, then smiled richly upon the two, and continued:

“Mistress Diana mounts me the steps very slow and stately, leaning upon the arm of her uncle. In the hallway (’tis a vast, great doorway — one could drive a coach through it at a gallop — and we who paid not a penny to the show saw it all from the street, like sitting in the pit of the theatre), in the hallway she meets her servants, all bedecked with new clothes of her buying to grace this occasion, and with smirks of their own invention to

back the clothes, and one old negress bent before her and saluted her as Mistress Cameron!

"Oh!" and he laughed, and all his listeners laughed after him. "She flew upon the old woman like a naughty child on its doll which it conceives to have offended, snatched the turban off the bobbing head, and beat and clouted her with it, crying out, 'Grinning fools, there was no wedding! I am not Mistress Cameron! Clear this hall! Carry those silly flowers and fling them into the creek. To the right about, every one of you!'

"So much I both saw and heard, sustaining myself, weak with laughter, against a lamp-post. Then my lady went into the great drawing-rooms, and at once a vast commotion broke out. They say she ran fairly amuck. Servants, musicians, tradesmen, and some few humble friends who had been bidden to assist in the entertainment, and had not been thought worthy to go to the church, she cuffed and pummelled and berated. She screamed, she raved, she tore down the garlands of flowers with her own hands. She grasped the edge of the great table-cloth on the feast-table, and, with a strength incredible for a woman, dragged it off. They say she broke five hundred pounds' worth of china and such like precious stuff."

"And well she might," commented Mr. Sparling. "Sir Hector Chaters brought home rare china from the countries he visited, and her table was a show in itself."

"Well, next minute," went on the young man, sipping first from one ale mug and then the other, "out came flying the musicians as though the devil were after them. One great fat fellow, with a

viol — hatless, and shielding his head with the big fat fiddle, as though he feared to be struck — came skimming past me, and I caught him by his coat and stayed him. 'Twas he who, when I had soothed him and put a quarter of good ale into him, gave me an account of the marvellous doings in the drawing-room and the banquet-hall."

"And you came away then?" questioned a listener.

"Nay, nay! Finest of all — and this I saw myself — was the last act," laughed the young man, setting down his mugs and nursing his knee. "The beautiful fury had a pipe of Madeira as old as she, a noble wine which her father, Sir Hector, had carried round the East India voyage in his own ship, and laid down to ripen under the cypress shingles of the great garret when she was born, that it might be broached on her wedding-day.

"This good wine — the thought of it makes my mouth to water — was all in flagons, and set forth upon a table at the back of the great hall. They say that her uncle — or perhaps it was the butler — made some mention of the fact that it was her wedding wine, and should be re-bottled to wait for that occasion. At any rate, out into the hall comes she flying, catches up a bottle of it, whirls it about her head and sent it spinning down through the brave ranks of the flagons, that the glass crashed and splintered, and the good red wine went spurting and spouting. The vixen made such a good shot that they swear no one flask was left unbroken."

"Come, now," interrupted Dad Buckaloo, sitting up with a sort of groan, "you are reporting villainies indeed. I have borne the relation of my

lady's other pranks, and even thought they showed her a lass of spirit. But that last was the doing of a hussy. To broach a man's head and spill his blood, may be a worthy act; but to broach good wine like that, and spill it upon the unthankful earth, is a fiend's trick. I would I had been there to catch some of it in my mouth — ”

“ Which is ever open,” interrupted Lit, pushing her father's great shoulder, and whispering to him.

“ Poor old Ringlets — ” began some one, when the young man on the bar interrupted.

“ O, yes, Sir Paris — Sir Ringlets — my fat fiddler told me later (when I had resurrected him with good ale) that Sir Paris would, past doubt, take to his bed. They say that if one of the household break a leg, Sir Paris is for bed forthwith; that when any member of the family suffers illness, or anybody whatever hath griefs, Sir Paris wends incontinent to bed. There is no claim that he is ill. 'Tis his way of meeting adversity — and not so bad a way, neither. I wonder what the bridegroom thinks by now of whether or no he hath made a good escape that the young termagant would not have him.”

Lit had come out of the corner and its shadows, and placed herself squarely before the young man, her head thrown back defiantly; and now she cried to him:

“ Do you not know, sir, or do you only feign not to know, that Mistress Diana Chaters was most cruelly jilted by Archibald Cameron? ”

“ Was — what? ” demanded the tipsy young man, setting down an ale mug rather suddenly.

"They tell me she slapped his face and sent him packing — or did I misunderstand what they said?"

"You sure understood not at all what they said," Lit echoed, bitterly, "or you so pretend. Archie Cameron, the hound, won this sweet young lady's affections, promised her marriage, and when, as you see, she had made a great feast and parade of the wedding, he staid away from the church and sent her word that he did not want her."

"Is this so?" cried the young man, springing down from the bar, and looking upon the faces about her for confirmation. "Why, this is not the story I was told."

"Except for some heat in the telling," sneered Tillsford, "'tis exact enough. Archie Cameron jilted the jade who had jilted his betters."

"And there was no man kin to her to debate that question with him?" inquired the newcomer. "Why, she is a most beautiful young woman, and of high birth. Was there no friend, even, to draw a sword for her?"

Lit stepped closer to the young man. "There was not one friend to speak a word for her in the church this morning," she cried, in her low, rich, thrilling contralto. "I put her poor head on my breast — I, a stranger — and between carried and led her to her coach."

The young man looked with more attention at Lit's flushed, tremulous, earnest face.

"It was well done, young mistress," he said. "I —"

"You men make a great talk of it that she behaved wildly and savagely," Lit interrupted, with vehemence. "Is't strange, think you, a head so

proud, and so shamed, should be crazed, too? 'Tis a sight more than bottles o' East India would ha' been smashed, had *I* been served as she was — poor maid — poor young lady!"

"Indeed, mistress, you shall pardon me," the young man persisted; "I was misinformed. I had not brought here my foolish tale so gaily had I known the truth of this matter."

"I warrant you would not," returned Lit, in a low tone and with an approving glance.

"And yet, 'twas a brave tale, and no doubt true every word," suggested Tillsford, laughing. "We are for the club, Major Fallowfield; if they have not heard the recital of that home-coming, they will thank us for it."

The young man who had told the story, and who seemed now greatly sobered by the outcome of it, approached the two gentlemen. "I beg you will not report the foolish things I said," he began. "They were mostly lies, and told in an unworthy spirit."

"As you please, sir," returned Fallowfield, smoothly, and Tillsford added, "The gentleman has a tender conscience. But 'twill take more than one scrupulous man to keep all Charles Town from humming with this tale to-night."

Drinking a modest mug of ale, and eating a lunch of bread and cheese at a little table removed from the others, there was a lean, shabby fellow, with an alert, ugly face, and the air of a journeyman in one of the more skilled trades. He was, in fact, a printer, employed on the *Charles Town Gazette*.

He had listened to the conversation thus far with

the know-it-all expression of a tap-room wiseacre; and now, as there came a little pause after Fallowfield's remark, his thin, nasal voice cut in with, "You're all mistaken; not one of you has touched the core of the matter yet. Archie had wedded the lady with no pother, had she been other than she is."

A roar of laughter here interrupted him. "Why, so we said," sneered Tillsford, and Dad Buckaloo boomed after him with, "That might be said of any trade or marriage which miscarries."

The printer remained unruffled. "You go off at the half-cock," he observed. "I do not mean the thing which you have said, that he was afraid of her temper."

"Perchance of her money?" suggested Tillsford.

"Why, as to that," imperturbably, "'twas neither here nor there with Archie Cameron. He hath money in his pocket, and knows where to get more."

There came a low-toned murmur of dissatisfaction, and a man leaning upon the bar muttered, "No fellow can walk the streets of Charles Town, with money in's pocket, but what there are hintings that he gets it unfairly from the high seas."

"I said not so," returned the printer. "but I do say to you that what Archie Cameron feared in the Honourable Diana Chaters was not her temper, but her wits. The Chaters family have ruled wherever they have set foot, and by G—,

"They've got the brains
To back their claims."

"The young mistress is a chip of the old block; and Cameron knew well enough that she would see

through him and read the seamy side of his affairs in no time. A fellow with matters to keep to himself doth not want a wife like Mistress Diana Chaters. So much is certain."

"What has Archie Cameron to hide from the public?" a sailorly appearing man demanded, in deep disgust. "What would you be hinting at? This city of Charles Town is the most infernal scandalous hole a man ever set his foot in. Let him dare get up so high as to become a mark for envy, and he must beware that he be able to tell which grandam left him every guinea he spends, or some man whispers 'piracy,' so sure as I'm alive." And he swore roundly.

The printer turned his eyes upon this new champion. "Did I say piracy, ye gowk? 'Twas you named the word, not I. Let Archibald Cameron tell, if he chooses, what 'tis that takes him on voyagings in a periagua out beyond the bar with two Indians for crew!

"Ah, fishing, is't?" as the other made some muttered reply. "Well, then, that's well, indeed. 'Tis profitable sport — this fishing. He baits his hook with information, and brings up gold fish.

"But the Lord knows," rising, shaking the crumbs from his garments and preparing to depart, "that I am the last man to hint at piracy or smuggling, or even a bit of decent privateering. I hint at nothing. We men who mould the world's opinion through the journals must e'en be careful what we say." And he strutted out with a frowning brow and an air of suppressed information and portentous wisdom.

"Aye," cried an old man, crouched over the fire,

"now hint, somebody, that the Spaniards have sent Archie Cameron up here to raise the negroes; that is the next thing coming."

"We'll not hint it," said one of the crowd about the bar, bluntly, "we'll say it when we choose, old man. 'Tis no jest to have Spain sending up her sneaking spies to raise our slaves against us."

Dad Buckaloo turned with some interest to the sailor-man who had first spoken. "What is't about Cameron? What hath he to do with any of this? Does any claim that the man is concerned with slave insurrections? They but accuse him of smuggling, or such, should you not say?" he asked.

"It's naught," answered the sailor, sulkily, burying his face in his quartern mug and refusing further reply.

"Why, the remarks get about," put in Tillsford, who appeared a man impartially pleased to give a thrust at friend or foe when occasion served, "the reports get about because certain ships, of which Archibald Cameron knew most, have come to Charles Town after suffering greatly from attacks of Spanish privateers, and that, within such waters as he might have commanded with this information of which our printer friend makes mention."

"The Spaniards!" put in old Sparling from his corner; "'tis not conceivable that the man is in league with the Spaniards."

"O, no," laughed Tillsford, "not conceivable; 'tis merely believed by some people. And here's a thing: The gentleman brought to Charles Town letters from old Farfrae MacBain, whom he had some concern with in Glasgow. And look you,

MacBain's ships have suffered more bitterly than the ships of any other merchant or owner. His friend, indeed! God save us from such friends, say I." And Tillsford and Fallowfield left the inn together.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE DUST

"Go, Betty, shut the bedroom door —
The curtain shed.
And, Betty, say I'm weary
— Betty — say I'm dead!"

LIT, standing back in the shadow, glanced quietly from one to another of the room's occupants; then, pulling her hood about her face, withdrew unobserved and stepped from the inn doorway, leaving the men behind her carousing, drinking, and still talking of poor Diana Chaters and her public jilting. Evening was closing in. On the corner the girl stopped and asked a negro vender of shrimps for directions to the Chaters mansion. Realising from the woman's description that she had seen the house that morning, she found it without further delay or trouble, raised and let fall the knocker on the great arched and pillared doorway, and was answered by a negro in livery.

"I want to see Mistress Chaters," she told him.

The negro shook his head. "Mistress Chaters don't see nobody," he announced, positively and finally.

"O, yes, she'll see me," urged Lit. "I've a thing to give her."

This seemed to arouse some interest. She was admitted to the vestibule, and the man hurried away to find and bring back with him a tall old negress in a great white turban, whom he addressed as "Ma'am Daphne."

"What you got for my lady?" Daphne inquired, severely.

"I've that which she'll want to see," returned Lit, promptly.

"You come from Captain Cameron?" was the next inquiry, made in a low voice, and after a furtive backward glance.

"No," began Lit, and then found that it had been a mistake; for the negress instantly refused any sight of her lady, insisting that Mistress Chaters was asleep and could not be disturbed.

Lit finally vouchsafed, by way of retrieving her error, "'Tis somewhat concerning the—the—what happened at the church to-day, and I must see her within the hour to tell it her. Do you but point out her room to me; I will take the risk and go in."

The woman's glance turned involuntarily toward the broad stairway. Lit followed its hint, and sprang lightly up, the negress at her heels, protesting and remonstrating. Above stairs, she found herself in a wide hallway, with cushioned seats in its recesses, a great oriental rug on its floor, and massive jars of oriental china sitting about, as one might often see them at that time in the homes of sea-captains of means. Sir Hector Chaters—father of Diana and elder brother of that doughty gentleman, the present baronet, Sir Paris—had been a brilliant naval commander; and it was his boast

that he had sailed his ship in every water of the globe, and brought home something from each coast he touched.

By instinct, Lit tried the first door she came to. It was locked, and there was no answer to her tapping.

"Y' see, now," breathed the negress over her shoulder, "you can't git in no mo' dan nobody else." Ma'am Daphne had come to feel that it might be advisable that the silence behind that door should be broken. "Mus' I call my lord?" she asked, anxiously.

"The old gentleman?" exclaimed Lit. "Lord, no! None would ever open a door because he asked 'em." And here she rapped upon the panels and called, "Mistress Chaters, Mistress Chaters! I've a message for you. 'Tis me, Lit Buckaloo, the maid who helped you to your carriage this morning."

There was a long silence, then a slight rustling, then the bolt shot back. Lit entered briskly. For a moment she thought the room empty; there was no candle lighted, and the evening shades made it so dusky that the black-robed figure crouched in a chair by the gaping fireplace might well have passed for one of the shadows.

Slightly taken aback at meeting no challenge, no greeting, no address of any sort, Lit fumbled in her bosom, brought out the brooch, and presented it. Diana did not raise her head, but when the ornament came within the range of her down-bent vision, reached out a nerveless hand and took it, while a voice dull, toneless, emptied, a voice which it seemed

to Lit might have proceeded from any inanimate object in the room, murmured :

"O, thank you. Did I drop it? I remember, I wore it — this morning." And at mention of that morning, its agonies seemed to come back upon Diana, and a long shudder shook her from head to foot.

Lit dropped on her knees beside the girl. "Lord a-mighty!" clasping the chair arms and looking up into the other's face, "what's all this about? What behaviour is this?"

Diana made a gesture of repulsion, as though she would have pushed the other away. "I thank you for what you did this morning," she uttered, finally, "and I thank you for bringing back my pin. I will give you — some money —"

"That you won't," retorted Lit, flushing a little. "I didn't come here for your money, Mistress Chaters."

Something in the tone roused Diana. "Why did you come here?" she demanded, rising and pushing past the kneeling girl. "Why did you come here — and force your way in — and look at me, when — when I cannot bear to be looked at? I will not be looked at." She turned on Lit fiercely. "Is it that you want to go back and tell tales of how I am bearing it? — how I acted? — whether I was pale or no? — whether I was sick abed?"

With an accuracy purely subjective, Lit gauged the nature she sought to lead. Rising and putting her hands truculently upon her hips, "Well," she said, "and now suppose I did? Suppose I had about a dozen dear gossips waiting to hear how Lady Diana Chaters took Archie Cameron's jilting?"

Shouldn't I have a fine tale to tell them? That she put on widow's weeds," catching at the filmy black dress, "that she locked herself in her bed-chamber, and was ashamed to show her face to any visitor —"

"Hush!" interrupted Diana, imperiously. "How dare you?"

"Wouldn't it be true?" went on Lit, sturdily. "Have you eaten anything since morning?"

"My negress told you that," cried Diana, angrily. "I'll deal with her."

"No, she told me nothing," Lit contradicted. "Couldn't I look at your pinched, perished face, and see that no bite had passed your lips this day? See how you play the fool, mistress, by your leave, and if you'll excuse the word. Look and see how you play into that man's hands. He has jilted you and made little of you; so now, you'll scorn yourself; you'll help him. When he puts a shame upon you, you'll wear it like a shame. Why, Lord be good to us! You should have on your gayest dress, and go forth among your friends, and hold your head up, like the lady and the beauty that you are."

"Friends!" cried Diana, sinking down into her chair once more. "I have none. You are the one woman who has shown kindness since this misfortune came upon me."

"Nay, I'll not believe it," remonstrated Lit, cheerily. "They cannot be all fiends, the people of this town. And they tell me you have lived among them since you were a little child. Sure, there must be some here that love you, if only for your wit and beauty."

"No, there are none!" cried Diana, with a

hunted, desperate look. "I cannot face them — I can never face them. When I think of things I have said and done — and then to come to this! I will sit here in this room till the thing is forgotten — I will cut my throat —"

She was walking up and down now, wringing her hands. "Why was I born?" she groaned, "or why did I not die when my father did? None would have dared scorn me so, while he lived."

The selfishness which had gained no friends, the false and overblown pride which lay bleeding under this cruel indignity, were plain to the visitor. The whole situation was to her a very open book. But Lit, loving and faulty, generally much self-condemned, was not wont to reprove others; and had she been, this, to her thinking, was not the time to preach to Diana Chaters. She sat, or half-kneeled upon the hearthstone, regarding the tall, stately young figure that passed backward and forward through the long, high-ceiled, sedate apartment, the slender, aristocratic hands, now wrung together, now tossed wildly above the shamed head; while Diana bewailed her fate in such broken words as came to her, and swore that if she were a man she would follow Archie Cameron across the world till she had wiped out the insult in his blood — that if there was a man kin to her who had the spirit of a man in him, Archie Cameron should not live a week — and thus on and on and on.

When finally there came a lull, through very weariness, in this tide of reproach and lamentation, Lit remarked, out of the fulness of her wisdom, "I'm hungry."

"Ma'am Daphne shall feed you," answered

Diana, indifferently. "Go down to her. Oh, to think that anybody could eat, now!"

"No," returned Lit, decidedly, "I shall not go down to Ma'am Daphne; I want something to eat — and drink — brought up here. I would talk to you about what you've just been saying. You spoke something of having a man to fight your battles — 'tis easy done, you know, when a maid is as fair and as great a lady as you are."

Diana looked with drawn brow and half-protesting air at this girl who did not know how to be abashed; but Lit went calmly to the door, called loudly to the frightened Daphne, who was no further away than the keyhole, and ordered, "Wine and meat for both of us — and be quick about it!"

When the little supper which poor, heart-sore Daphne had been grieving over for hours was spread, Lit drew two chairs beside it and coaxed Diana to sit in one of them.

"I never could eat alone," she protested, "nor drink neither, for that matter. Never mind if you don't take anything, do just sit there," and she whispered Daphne hastily to lay a fire on the desolate hearthstone for sake of cheer.

The negress, taking her cue from these directions, lit the candles in the silver sconces, and soon the room was glowing with the leaping, broken brightness of flames from the pine knots, and the clearer, steadier radiance of the candles.

"There! 'Tis as the bower of a beautiful young lady should be, isn't it?" inquired Lit, innocently, as she turned to her companion while Ma'am Daphne was closing the door. "Now, if you'll but eat a bite of this venison, and drink a sup o'

wine, 'twill do you a mort o' good. Don't drink the wine first, on an empty stomach that way, or you'll be seeing double."

Diana turned her face aside, with a gesture of disrelish. "I know not why I allow you to — to —" she faltered. "I wish you would go away. I don't know you," but she made no movement to leave the table, nor to alter any of the girl's arrangements.

The red mantled richly in Lit's dark cheek. She was of as high a mettle, as independent a spirit, as Diana herself. Had she given her quick temper a moment's way, she had left the lady to her own desperate devices. It was love that held her here — a most real affection — suddenly conceived, and continually added to and confirmed by its object's helplessness and pathetic need of counsel and protection.

"What news do you reckon Archie Cameron would like to hear from you?" she demanded, roughly. Diana flinched, and turned away with a sort of groan.

"Just the very news I could tell him," went on Lit, remorselessly. "Now what is the news that would make him sing small, if you could send it him?"

"A sword through his heart! That is the only message I would send him," returned Diana, fiercely. "A sword through his coward heart; that is what he deserves!"

"Well, you can't do that so easy," commented Lit, philosophically. "Next best thing is to make him look as much like a fool as you can. Send him word that you're married."

"Married!" breathed Diana, turning to face her tormentor. "Who would have me now? Oh! I numbered my lovers by the score before this thing chanced; and I flouted them all. Would they not be glad of a chance to pay me back in kind? Dare I show one of them countenance?"

Lit gazed at her admiringly. "'Tis likely," she said, "that any of 'em would be glad to come back. But you know best what you want to do. If you can't stay here and marry and hold up your head, why not try a new place?"

"A new place?" echoed Diana. Then, leaning back and striking the board with her clenched fingers, "No!" she stormed, "I will not go back to England, and have this story follow me there!"

"Who spoke of England?" answered Lit. "I came up here by way of Savannah. 'Tis a new country, but most beautiful. And down there, be English and Scots and French and Dutchmen, that speak a most ungodly tongue — besides all manner of Indians — and all of them so put about in these war times that none will stop to question who ye are or whence ye come. Drink a glass of wine now, like a good soul, and think it over."

So deep was Diana in the contemplation of these plans, the first coherent thought which she had given to the new condition of her affairs, that she allowed Lit to urge upon her a small sweet biscuit and a half glass of Madeira; but at the meat she rebelled.

"I am not hungry," she protested. "Let me think. Savannah, said you? Why, that is the new province, is it not — is that not it? Who is the man in charge — the head man? James Ogle-

thorpel" She sprang up and struck her hands together. "That is it!" she cried, "I still have a — He was my father's friend, and he will be mine. I'll sell this house and my servants —"

"But take your horses with you," put in Lit. "And why do you sell your servants?"

"That they shall not be prating of this thing and blabbing of it," answered Diana, bitterly.

"No," remonstrated Lit. "The old woman who let me in would never do that. You must trust people," she urged, with kindly insistence. "if you expect to get any good out of 'em; that I know. Take the old woman with you, and find your horses. We have too few good horses down that way, except the wild ones that no man can catch or tame; and yours are fine. I marked them when your coach drove up this morning."

Diana's manner had now become as feverishly alert as it had before been coldly relaxed. "Have you had enough supper?" she demanded. "I would have you see my uncle."

Poor Lit, who had been making laborious pretence of eating something — no small undertaking upon the part of her supper at the inn — gladly welcomed the sending away of the tray; but she would not allow Diana to purchase it by eating a morsel more of food and drinking a few more sips of wine. As it was done, Sir Paris was summoned. He came from his bed, they were informed — wrapped in a long silken gown, his face washed clean of rouge, and in his own hair instead of a wig, with a peculiarity won him his sobriquet. Seen thus, he looked a lean and shattered old man though his years were indeed but barely fifty-six.)

with a deprecating manner, a halting step, and an eye of purpose so feeble as to be almost furtive. In one arm he carried a small King Charles spaniel, which had a grotesque resemblance to himself, with its drooping, curled ears and its aristocratic, bored, plaintive little countenance.

"I trust," he lisped, "that Belinda will not be considered an intrusion. The poor soul was so —"

"Uncle," interrupted Diana, imperiously, "I am going to Savannah to live."

"Hold, Diana," quavered her uncle, raising a tremulous, remonstrant hand; "let me sit before you begin on one of your tirades."

Lit obligingly placed a chair, and Sir Paris sank into it, arranged Belinda upon his shaking knees, and fanned himself with his handkerchief.

"Why have you a fire on such an evening as this?" he chafed, between timid and irritable, "it smothers one. My good wench," to Lit, "would you mind bringing my smelling-bottle from the next room? Or no, I left it in my bedroom. Ring the bell for Junius. He will get it, my child; I need not trouble you."

Neither Diana nor Lit attended to these remarks. "Uncle," repeated his niece, "I am quitting Charles Town. I shall leave Matthew Zubley to sell this house — to sell everything I possess in this province. And I am going to Savannah."

"To Savannah!" echoed her uncle. "Why, that is where Jamie Oglethorpe is trying to build a town. He is a good fellow; perhaps he will attend to us. You might go down there for the winter, later, when you can make your arrangements at leisure."

"I am going to-morrow," cut in Diana, savagely.

"You are going —" began her uncle, and then paused helplessly.

"I am going to-morrow. As for all the unfinished business that I must leave, my steward can attend to it. I prefer that you should accompany me when I go."

"But the curiosities? The house plenishings? Your father's rich collections?" recited her uncle, querulously; "what will you do with them?"

"Burn them — throw them into the sea — do whatever I choose with them. Are they not mine?" ejaculated Diana, with fierce energy.

"My dear child," remonstrated Sir Paris, "why put it so coarsely? 'Tis certain that everything in this house is yours. It is also certain that all the members of your household can have no doubt upon the subject. They have heard you mention the fact daily — or perhaps thrice daily — for many years. But I do not wish to see you —"

Diana's colour had risen. She was about to burst forth with some retort. But Lit, reading the signs of a family quarrel, intervened courageously with, "Old gentleman, it seems to me that this is not the time to bring her to book for past faults. If she is spoiled, maybe you had a good hand in the spoiling. She feels, I take it, as though her uncle might have protected her from what happened to-day. And as you did it not, why, best keep silent about her shortcomings, and do now what she asks of you, without question. Do you think, yourself, she's like to settle down to a happy life, here in —"

"Well, well, good wench," hastily interposed Sir

Paris, "what is to be done, then? There is no ship—"

"Aye, it chances that you may go to-morrow, if you can make ready in time, and do not take too much luggage; for the Company's sloop, *Good Report*, is up here, and goes back with passengers and freight to-morrow. 'Tis General Oglethorpe's own sloop of war; but as you are friends of his, you can get a passage in it fast enough. I go back in this boat, and my father. Do not fail to have your horses sent," turning to Diana very earnestly. "I love a good horse."

At the words, "General Oglethorpe's sloop of war," Sir Paris had slightly started. Now he cried out, "Heavens, Diana! we can't go to this place the maid talks of. What was I thinking about not to remember that Jamie Oglethorpe's in a peck of trouble with the rascally, negro-seducing dons at Augustine. Why, they even talk of war."

"Yes," assented Lit, "they do so talk. We brought the general's letter to your lieutenant-governor. But, old gentleman, that's just the place for you—or for the maid. As for danger, there's no more of it in Savannah than in Charles Town. If once the Spanish overbear the general's defences at St. Simons, and destroy Savannah and the Georgia settlements, they will sweep the coast like a tidal wave. 'Tis well known this is what they intend. And the bustle about war takes all the people's thoughts off everybody and everything else."

"Ha! so it would!" cried Diana, with eagerness, "while here," bitterly, "to-day—this evening—in all Charles Town there will be nothing else talked of. Around the supper-tables—they

used to sit there staring and whispering of my beauty, my wealth, my daring ways; admiring me, wondering at me, envying me. Now they forget their awe, and dare lift their heads to jibe and jeer at — ”

“ My dear niece — ” broke in Sir Paris, timidly; but she fairly blew him off the scene with the rush and fury of her passion. “ Don’t tell me — the idle, envious, malicious fools! Ah — ah — ah! For weeks and weeks, for a year, no two cap borders will come close together, without my name and a sneer being whispered between them. And worse — oh, worst of all! — the men — the men in every tap-room.”

Lit looked at Diana, startled.

“ Wherever there’s a man I’ve rejected, or even scanted to favour, — and God knows Charles Town’s full of them, — wherever there’s a sword and a pair of jack-boots, a curled wig and a cane, with a bottle between; or even a blouse and a smock-frock, with a couple of mugs of ale upon the table, my name will be bandied, the jest of every drunken loafer who chooses to air his wit at the expense of one whom he could never behold save to admire! ”

Lit’s great, deer-like eyes rounded upon Diana in amazement, almost in terror, as she heard her describe with such truth the scene she herself had witnessed at the Boar’s Head within the hour. It was as though the frenzy of Diana’s emotion had wrought her to clairvoyance.

“ ’Tis envy because I was set up so high. ’Tis the delight of crawling souls to see that which is above them brought low, that which is beautiful and bright befouled with slime and mud. I cannot bear it,

I will not, I will be rid of it! If I stop here, I shall die! oh, I shall die, I shall die!"

Later, when Sir Paris had assured her that she need not remain in Charles Town an hour beyond her own will, and they had come to the discussion of means and methods, "Savannah," murmured the baronet, meditatively, leaning his head back against the chair and closing his eyes. "'Tis near there, if I mistake not, 'tis somewhere off that coast, the island upon which the cruelest and fairest of her sex has chosen to build her home; a second Calypso, mourning a second — and yet more unworthy — Ulysses, in the person of my own mistaken and ungrateful brother. So you are going to Hastie for —"

"Cousin Hastie!" interrupted Diana, "Why, so 'tis. I had not thought of Cousin Hastie. I wonder now —" and she drew her brows and brooded upon the matter.

"I allude," said Sir Paris, in a leisurely and grandiose fashion, "to Haste-thee Wynnewoode, that lady of the marble heart, who has forsworn speech because a man (your Uncle Ulysses, never worthy of such charms) saw fit to quarrel with and part from her in anger. Now I, had she listened to my suit, would have regarded those things which he found unbearable as but the expressions of a high spirit. And yet," and the old gentleman took his small, delicate handkerchief gingerly from under the objecting Belinda, who had carefully arranged herself upon it, wiped his lips, dusted his lace ruffles, and looked at the two girls inquiringly, before he concluded, "and yet, she scorns my suit."

So little were his remarks regarded that Diana

was once more deep in conversation with Lit. "Do you know of the Isle of Hope, and the plantations upon it?" she demanded. "One is Colonel Jones's, a very fine place, Wormsloe. The other is my cousin Haste-thee Wynnewoode's. She calls it Wynnewoode, and 'tis, they say, as beautiful — but not so extensive."

"O yes, I know the place," Lit answered. "It is owned and managed by a woman, and she raises main fine horses. My father has been there, but I have not. 'Tis inland from Tybee."

"I think I shall go there," Diana concluded, "if" — with some hesitation, and a sort of drop — "if she will have me."

"Ah, cruel, cruel Hastie," chimed in Sir Paris's unnoted antistrophe, "she would not have me, though I besought her many times. Is that all, Diana?"

"'Tis all," returned his niece, "except that I have changed my plans somewhat. I shall go to Savannah, and from there send word to Cousin Hastie. If she will admit us, her plantation would make a refuge for me until a house can be bought and my affairs placed in the new town."

"Well, then, if that be all, my dear, Belinda and I will take ourselves away. We are ready to be called upon if needed, but we do not wish to intrude. Discharge your mind of care about the gardens. I will see that all desirable seeds go with us, and that Sogo prepares such choice plants as can be lifted at this season. I give you good night, my niece — good night, young woman."

As he passed to his own rooms, he said sighingly to Belinda, "'Tis sure a pity to forsake this sweet

spot — the home poor Hector builded — when its graperies are at such perfection, its limes and figs and orange-trees beyond aught I have ever seen. To go to a new, barren land, a place of poor debtors; no slaves, no rum! Truly, it sounds little hopeful." And he sighed again, deeply.

Later, in his room, when his man Junius had made him ready and put him to bed, spread the dainty coverlet over Belinda's slumbers, and retired, Sir Paris, lying on the great pillared, canopied couch, drew the night-lamp toward him, lit his candle at it, and prepared to read. "Livy is wondrous soothing to a perturbed mind," he said. "And so, I am to follow Hastie — I, who was never bold enough suitor to brave the least drawing of her brows — 'tis little I thought to do this. And poor Hector's house sold to strangers, because a wilful maid comes to shipwreck in her ill-conceived love-affairs! Ah, poor creatures of Chance that we are! Spun helpless between the thumb and finger of Fate, coming up heads or tails, with no choosing of our own."

And so he fell asleep, while in the room he had left a girl lay upon her bed, wakeful, dry-eyed, desperate, or walked the long apartment, through black shadow and patches of broken moonlight, always planning, planning, planning the myriad trivial details of her removal; the vengeance of which she would sometime have her fill; the letters she would write to England, to her kin there, to contradict other letters which she guessed were even now being penned, and from thought of which she shuddered away, sick at heart.

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEJIRA

"O GALLANT captain, show some pity
To a lady in distress;
Leave me not within the city,
For to die in heaviness."

BUT Diana Chaters did not leave Charles Town on the day following her humiliation, as she had planned to do. She rose that morning, like the good woman of Scripture, "while it was yet dark," gathered her household together and set each one a task toward the uprooting of a home which had been building for nearly a quarter of a century.

The girl was possessed of fine executive ability, a genius for affairs, and the instinct of command; indeed, it was these unused, fermenting powers of hers which led to so much that was unworthy of her womanhood. But even she, born leader and chieftainess that she was, could not accomplish the impossible.

By noon, her most precious possessions were strewn over the floors, she had personally chastised one or two servants, and harangued and rebuked all the others till they were in a nervous tremor, and reduced to the point of uselessness through sheer

dread of her tongue. Poor Sir Paris, who for a time — taking a leaf out of her own book — shut himself up in his room and refused to be drawn by any lure, finally came out and, making a feeble stand upon some point which he conceived personally to concern him, thereby fell into the most unseemly wrangle with his niece.

In the midst of this coil arrived Lit, with news that the sloop could not sail that day, as the millwright and cooper who had been sent from England to Oglethorpe's Georgia settlement, and whom the sloop had specially come up to fetch, were nowhere to be found.

"They go at dawn to-morrow," Lit announced, "whether these men be forthcoming or no."

"At dawn to-morrow!" echoed Sir Paris, with a sigh of relief. "We may easily be ready by that time."

"I am ready this instant, sir!" cried Diana, with wrathful energy. "I could walk out of this house and leave this petty trash upon its walls and floors to ruin, or to the flames, without a qualm." But Lit observed it as a good sign that the young vixen turned and addressed herself with renewed industry to the matter of seeing her household gear properly packed and disposed.

Down at the landing, a very wroth man, Captain Watcher Stirkey, walked backward and forward and cast angry glances up the main street which led from the shipping region into the walled town. Beside him in the harbour, the *Prince of Wales* rode at anchor, an English brig; and there had come across in her a certain mill, a millwright, and a cooper for the Georgia plantations. Captain Stir-

key, who had been warned that these skilled mechanics were much desired in all the colonies, and might be debauched from him, had conscientiously lived up to his name of watcher; but, alas, the sloop *Good Report* met unfavourable winds coming up from Tybee, and she entered Charles Town harbour at the tail of the *Prince of Wales*.

The brig was scarcely at anchor, and a boat or two passed between its deck and the landing, when Captain Stirkey was over the side demanding his millwright and cooper. They had gone ashore, he was suavely informed. It was like he would find them at the Sailor's Rest.

To the Sailor's Rest he made what speed he could, and in the tap-room met old Dad Buckaloo, who had come up to Charles Town seeking indigo seed with which he was desirous of experimenting at his plantation down in the Creek country, for in all this region the wild indigo had been found growing profusely. Old Dad had the name of being the sworn ally of the last person who talked to him, and old Dad asserted that the millwright and the cooper had not entered the Sailor's Rest.

"Yet there were sailors about, and many strangers and newcomers, and you might have missed them?" asked Captain Stirkey.

And his boatswain, Silas Wragg, added, "Were you a-lookin' for them, Muster Buckaloo?"

Of the long chase which followed; of the information which came to poor Captain Stirkey that his men had been decoyed away and made drunk; of the assistance which Lit Buckaloo gave him; of the half-dozen times that he thought he had located the deserters and was disappointed; — of this wild pro-

cession of happenings it boots not to tell here. Suffice it to say that he was loading the useless mill upon his sloop in an extremely acrimonious frame of mind when Lit made her application that Diana Chaters's household, and the chattels thereunto appertaining, be given passage to Savannah.

Almost any one else the captain, at that especial juncture, would have answered with a surly denial. But Lit had earned her place in his good graces, and she proceeded to make her standing yet more secure by assuring him that amongst other possessions which he should transport was the handsomest team of English bay horses that she had seen for a year.

"I know not what other beasts they may have, but these horses will be a credit to the colony. I shall be proud to see them on the streets of Savannah."

And Captain Stirkey grumbled himself away to superintend the placing of some stores by his mixed outfit of negroes, Indians, and wharf loafers.

Above the green waters of the harbour rose very slightly the irregular roofage of what had originally been the walled town, within which were the first houses built when defence from imminent Indian attacks made the wall, with its bastions and towers, necessary. But now in the peninsula the streets had stretched out, and more stately homes had been built for thirty years past, till the seaboard city was indeed an imposing sight.

It obtained little favour, however, in Captain Stirkey's eyes, who looked upon it but to curse it, and whose heart was scarcely softened when the

great coach and the two English horses were brought aboard from one of the quays.

Having prosecuted the search for his evasive mechanics during the night, the captain's temper was not improved. He may be said to have been rather at his worst when, in the gray dawn of the following morning, Diana Chaters and her uncle reached the landing. The coach being gone, and Diana unwilling to call a public conveyance, they had come down afoot, a strange and pitiful small procession, through the growing, uncertain light; the tall girl leading with her uncle, behind her Ma'am Daphne and Juno bearing her most cherished personal belongings, Juno in proud charge of the jewel-case, and Daphne with a writing-desk and coffer which contained letters and papers of value. After them also, Chaka, the Indian coachman, with a great bale upon his shoulder; Sogo, the African negro gardener; Sir Paris's man Junius, who was the husband of Juno, Belinda in his arms, with Pompey the butler, and a dwarfish, ill-favoured mestizo woman, scullery-maid, commonly called Chunkey, probably a free translation of her Indian name.

When this caravan presented itself to the astonished eyes of the captain, he halted it. "The *Prince of Wales* does not sail for two days," he announced. "No doubt you are seeking passage in the *Prince of Wales*."

"No, sir," returned Diana, firmly. "If you be Captain Watcher Stirkey, and that," pointing to the masts against the pallid sky, "your sloop, *Good Report*, we are passengers for it, and are going down to Savannah with you."

The little huddled, dispirited group paused behind

Diana, standing silent, or speaking in that relaxed, nerveless manner which evidences the depression of people dragged from their beds before their hour of rising. Diana herself felt the subduing power of the time and place. Only Captain Stirkey displayed vigour, and as he had been for one hour putting all his energy into anathematising the people of Charles Town, this sad little train was quite out of keeping with the temper of his thoughts. Preoccupied with the exasperation of his own affairs, the captain had not understood that passage for a lady was included in his promise to move the Chaters household and goods — and a mincing fine lady of Charles Town at that. Now he drew back his head upon his thick shoulders, squared a heavy jaw, and glowered at her from under bushy gray brows.

"I think you are mistaken, mistress," he said. "You do not know the lack of accommodation upon my boat. I think you are going in the *Prince of Wales*. Why, what childish folly is this?" he burst out, as she shook her head in negative. "The brig sails but two days later; in it you can go in comfort — and be desired. Upon my poor sloop you are not wanted; and if there comes a capful of wind — as chanced on the voyage up — we will all be put about by your fine lady airs, your faintings and your fright, which will take the heart out of everybody. No! I say I will not have it!"

"Yet there is a young woman who goes down with you, as I understand it," began Diana, in angry remonstrance.

"O, a stout wench like old Dad Buckaloo's daughter; that is another matter. But go you to Captain Percy, of the *Prince of Wales*. He hath

not had his temper riddled by the piracies of the parti-coloured demons who pass for inhabitants of this town; and he ever loves to make his manners to a petticoat."

"That I will not," asserted Diana. "I go with you, and to-day, sir. Where is your boat? I do not sail in the *Prince of Wales*, to please you or any other man."

"Well, come with him, or not — as your pleasure is. With me you shall not come. Yon sloop hath not an inch more room than I have need of to curse withal, from here clean to Savannah."

"To curse!" cried Diana, with a curious little bitter laugh breaking in on her rising belligerency. "To curse, is it? And you deny me passage because I would check your cursing of Charles Town! Nay, sir, I would assist you to the best of my ability, and with a right good will."

In her morbid condition — a state of acute monomania — Diana took it for granted that Captain Stirkey knew of her, and of the humiliation she had suffered at St. Philip's the day before. It was not conceivable to her mind that people in Charles Town spoke of much else. Now, the mad suspicion came to her that he desired to delay or prevent her departure, that she might be held up for further ridicule.

"No doubt, sir," she burst out, "you think yourself a man, and very worthy — oh! no doubt you think well of yourself to abet those who — to abet those who would —"

"I abet nobody!" roared the captain, in a sudden excess of exasperation. "But I do rule my own deck; and I say you shall not put foot upon it, whoever you be."

The closing words suggested to Diana that she had not yet been recognised. When he knew her he must know her plight, and it was not possible he would longer deny her.

"I am Diana Chaters," she announced, with a sort of desperate humility. "Now do you see that you must take me away from Charles Town — that I go, whether you will or no?"

"The aristocracy of this godless town is nothing to me," retorted the captain. "A pirate's skulking-place it was, and still is. I know nothing of any Mistress Diana Chaters booked to come with me — I have ne'er heard the name. And you do not go — mind that. Robbed — befooled — made a mock of — I am still captain here — and you *do not go!*"

Out of the muffling mist, quite at Diana's shoulder, a big voice suddenly spoke in suave command.

"Mistress Chaters is of my party, sir. I think you must strain a point, and make room for her."

Diana looked, and saw in the obscurity a very tall, dark man whose face was strange to her, and upon whom the captain glared as though he had never seen him before, but to whom he answered civilly enough.

"Well, if she be of your party, Mr. Buccleugh, that makes a difference. Why was I not told of it?"

"The lady made her plans but suddenly," returned the other. "Allow me, madam," and he reached a hand to help her into the boat which lay ready to convey himself and the captain to the sloop.

Such was old Dad's first meeting with Diana Chaters. What it was in her that appealed to him,

what memories she brought back of bright, gay, high-born girls who were his cousins or the sisters of his mates, one can only guess. Whether her imperious beauty and unbridled temper sounded a kindred chord and made him desire to appear at his best before her, made him pose once more as Alexander Buccleugh — whatever the cause, certain it is that old Dad Buckaloo turned to the proud young beauty a phase of his character which had been so long forgotten that it was made appear she struck out something new in him.

When Lit, running down to the landing and hailing the yawl after it had left the shore, came aboard, panting, bringing with her at last the precious packet of indigo seed which had been the object of their journey, and which had been overlooked and left behind at the Boar's Head, her father was nowhere to be seen. Later, when the sloop was approaching White Point, and Diana, the town once left indeed, had grown brave and was standing on deck watching it moodily as the rising sun struck athwart the wooded slopes beyond it, and the pleasant vistas of its vanishing streets, old Buckaloo came on deck, dressed like a gentleman in a suit of plum-coloured cloth, his great black mane neatly tied with a finger-wide black ribbon. Lit, standing beside Diana, who was questioning her of Stede Bonnet and his pirate crew that lay buried on the beach below high tide, (where the battery now stands,) looked around, failed to recognise the strange figure, then gasped and clutched at the nearest object for support. It was with difficulty that she managed to command herself sufficiently to say when old Dad approached:

“Father, this is Mistress Chaters, of whom I

spoke to you; Mistress, this is my father, who goes by the name of Buckaloo."

"I am Alexander Buccleugh, at your service," responded old Dad, bowing grandly.

Diana was gazing at the line of white foam which covers the spot where the pirate graves were made. She brought her eyes away from it long enough to glance at the man, smile haughtily, and say, in a tone pleasanter than her look would have promised:

"You have already been of service to me, Mr. Buccleugh, by your intercession with the raving lunatic we have for captain, and from your daughter I have received the only kindness any woman has shown me since — since —" and she broke off and stared moodily once more at the vanishing city.

As the sloop rounded White Point, Captain Stirkey, who had somewhat recovered from his spleen, and now showed a disposition to play the host to his unwelcome passenger, stretched a hand toward the line of combing breakers which indicates White Point at flood tide, and observed:

"'Tis there that Stede Bonnet and his forty pirates all were buried in chains"

"Yes, 'twas the entire crew," commented Sir Paris. "How very unpleasant — for them."

"Nay, there was one of the fellows was not condemned to death. Bonnet himself made one escape, but he was brought back; and according to the tale that I have been told, all were hanged save that one."

"And he," broke in Buccleugh, "what for a looking man would he have been, should you say?"

"My acquaintance with pirates is limited, sir,"

returned Captain Stirkey. "The thing happened some eleven years ago."

"Yea," pursued Buccleugh, with one of his strange smiles, "near eleven years ago it is, and I warrant the chap of whom you speak was a limber, black-eyed deil of a fellow, with never a hair on's face, ready to put his judges to their wits' end in argument, and any man to the sword's point in a fencing-bout. The others, sink them, were blundering rogues — journeymen pirates — but a skilful sword he had and a smooth tongue."

"I do not think," commented Captain Stirkey, sternly, "that the pirates dealt greatly in fencing. The person of whom you speak, and for whom you profess so much admiration, was probably more nearly concerned with causing men — aye, and women and children — to walk the plank."

"No, that he never did," denied Buccleugh; "with all his faults he was humane. When such goings-on were a-gate, he ever went below. 'Twas the fighting only in which he took part; and 'twas that which every pirate man in the ship united in declaring won him indulgence." He strolled away down the deck with an air of being able, if he chose, to add much to the information he had already given.

"What would the man be at?" inquired Sir Paris, languidly.

"He ever likes to hint," the captain replied, testily, "that he hath been with pirates; and 'tis very like that such is the case. He was a wild blade in his youth, and is not much better these days. The general finds him of use with the Indians. I believe him to be as honest and humane with them as he

is dishonest and inhumane with people of his own race. He has an Indian wife —

Sir Paris motioned slightly toward where Lit and Diana were approaching, and the captain checked his remarks. "You can see yourself how he might be useful," he added, in a lower tone.

"I find him a most engaging gentleman," Sir Paris murmured, with an air of closing the interview. Later in the day, he approached Lit and her father, and addressed old Dad with great elaboration.

"Your pardon, sir. The name which you gave my niece this morning —" The two turned to face him. "Alexander Buccleugh, I think you said. Are you, mayhap, related to the Buccleughs of Kildonan?"

"My father is Laird of Kildonan," returned Buccleugh.

"Your father?" repeated Sir Paris, inquiringly. "Pardon me; I should have supposed — I have met the laird. He is a man but little older than yourself."

"You allude to my brother," said Buccleugh, shortly. "My father has been dead for some years. He is laird of Kildonan. My brother is, as you say, but little my elder. Sufficient, however, that I am not laird."

This very novel method of acknowledging himself a younger son seemed to tickle Sir Paris. He chuckled, and looked at Buccleugh with new interest.

"You would not have been at Cambridge, I take it?" he asked, tentatively.

"I took my degree — and took it ere I was one and twenty, at the University of Edinburgh," re-

sponded Buccleugh, briefly. "Are you writing a book, sir, that you seek so much information?"

"Exactly, exactly," fluttered Sir Paris. "I am writing a genealogy of the Chaters family. And the Chaters family is connected by marriage with the lairds of Spens, who in their turn, though you may not know it, are connected by marriage once more with the Buccleugh family, or more properly, I should say, with the family from whom certain of the Buccleughs descend by the maternal side. It is —" Sir Paris was going on, with raised finger, when old Dad interrupted him with a rather grim laugh.

"Spare us the details. I myself am my own ancestor; and my daughter here hath an ancestry of which she may well be proud. A prince's daughter was her mother; and yet she blushes whene'er 'tis mentioned: look at her now."

Lit turned her shoulder, and hid her angry face by joining Diana, who appeared at the boat's side.

"You married, ah — one, ah — of the aboriginal ladies, I take it," commented Sir Paris, smoothly.

"I did," returned Buccleugh. "And I have a son whom any prince in Europe might be proud to own."

"And this one beauteous daughter, as well," reminded Sir Paris.

Buccleugh cast a swift, stealthily smiling glance at Lit's back, which seemed to say that she had heard all their talk, and answered:

"Yes; with a Creek princess for her mother, and a Scottish laird to father her, she should be a lass of spirit. And she is."

The shores of Charles Town had dwindled now

to a low green line, with here and there a nick or break upon it, which meant a plantation or a clearing. Diana turned, with one last black look like a curse, and went below. Lit followed her after a time, and the two men, who found themselves alone, remained on deck talking.

Junius, Sir Paris's man, was tall, black, graceful, with a savage, rolling eye, and the unusual adornment, for a negro face, of a pair of fierce moustachios. He had the carriage of a game-cock, the swagger of an ebony Achilles.

Sir Paris took pride in his mettlesome beauty, as one might in the appearance of a favourite horse. "He meets my fancy of the Moor in Mr. Shakespeare's excellent tragedy," his master said. "'Twould be a shame to have him in shabby cotton-ades and homespuns — though indeed the rogue makes cloth-of-gold of all he puts on."

The baronet had devised for his attendant a livery which looked not so strange to eighteenth century eyes as it would to those of our times. Junius himself felt deep and evident delight in its eastern glitter and gaudiness, and wore like a crest upon his proudly carried head the aigretted turban which went with it.

This regalia absolved him from certain servile regulations. "One cannot be always doffing a turban as one may a hat — 'twould be absurd. Make a proper bow, Junius, and let the head-gear alone," ran Sir Paris's commands.

And Junius made the most of this privilege, bearing himself with the insolent elegance of a prince. Yet when the offence is in a man's muscles and bones, in the roll of an eye which turns when the head does not, in the flexible posing of a hand upon

a hip — so that, it seems, the jewelled hilt of a scimitar must be underneath the brown fingers — one is at a loss just where to place the indignity.

In the choice of this handsome savage for personal attendant, Sir Paris displayed no little of the characteristic Chaters spirit. To set such a champion at lugging a lap-dog about, and make him master of the infinite niceties which went to the care of an eighteenth century beau's fineries, these were tasks that needed a brave man. And many of Sir Paris's cronies, who held him but a foolish, fribbling nonentity, yet warned him that this man of his was like, at the slightest check, to put a knife in his master's heart, and be off for Augustine; and added (though none saw the bravery of Sir Paris Chaters doing so) that themselves would not dare trust such a savage about their throats with a razor daily.

"He's a devil of a fellow among the wenches," complained poor Matthew Zubley, the steward. "We have ever a pair of 'em — or more — ready to claw each other's windpipes for his sake; while the sober men of the plantation have good reason for to go about to slay him. He'll cost you a negro or more before you're quit of him — and no man but yourself may give him a reproof and sleep o' nights thereafter. Be advised. Sell him."

But the baronet laughed at these prognostications — indeed, they added to the pride he felt in his remarkable attendant. And so, whoever was omitted from this hejira, the tall black went.

Now Sir Paris, calling from above directed Junius to bring up Belinda. "The poor soul," the master explained, turning to Buckaroo, "is like to

suffer greatly from the sickness of the sea, and I would fain have her where she can breathe the fresh air, enjoy this fair prospect, and my attentions at one and the same time."

"Another finicky female aboard," growled the captain, *sotto voce*, as he passed. "I shall thank God when I see Tybee Roads."

"A lemon," suggested old Dad, "would relieve the lady, perhaps."

"She would not take it," sighed the baronet. "Belinda is most monstrous fond of sweets; but just in proportion as she loves them, she abhors acids."

Buckaloo drew back in some surprise as the tall black man came up the companionway, bearing a small and shivering King Charles spaniel.

The insignificant beast deposited on Sir Paris's knees, the attendant was ordered back for a heavier wrap to spread over it, a dish of milk, a small sweet-cake, and some few other trifles, and the baronet settled down to a comfortable hour's coddling of his pet.

When the breakfast-bell rang, Belinda was elaborately transferred to Junius's knees. As they went below, Buckaloo, glancing back, had sight of a strange picture.

A light breeze fled along the horizon with gleaming feet, leaving a shining trail. Against the tossing, pale green background, the dusky head and crimson turban of the tall, erect, black warrior stood suddenly forth as he sat, alien and uncompromising as an idol, the dog, a tiny rag of life, laid like a sacrifice across his knees. And it was in the Scotchman's mind that if he largely loved the creature, or

much desired its continued existence, he should have some qualms at this juxtaposition.

After breakfast, Lit found opportunity for speech with the old man, and instantly inquired, "Where had you those clothes?"

Her father looked down at his well-clad limbs, and pulled the ruffles about his hands. "I got them from the box of a fellow who is not aboard," he announced, blandly. "His family — decent, right-minded people — are sending him out clothes from England. 'Tis a good suit, is it not? After the Scotch, I ever like English cloth. 'Tis so well made, and wears, too. 'Tis my good luck the man was my size — he must be a pretty fellow, for they fit me most exactly, do they not?"

"That they do," declared Lit, warmly. "But what will you say to their owner when we are come to Savannah?"

"Why, can I insure the safe delivery of every package that comes aboard the sloop that I fall to be passenger upon?" inquired her father, with virtuous indignation. "No, Lit; you carry things too far. 'Tis not my fault if the lid comes off his box, and I mistake it for my chest, in the general confusion."

"I carry things too far, do I?" retorted his daughter, laughing. "That is what I thought when I saw that ribband on thy hair. When has thy hair been combed at all? Was't not enough to comb it, but thou must go and tie thy locks up with a ribband? Fie! Salequah will not know thee."

At the name of his little Indian son, the man's face softened and changed wonderfully.

"Will he like it, think you?" he inquired. "Nay,

the boy marks nothing about dress. He will not care at all."

"And I think," declared Lit, "that 'twill pleasure him, though he is an Indian lad, to be a gentleman's son—and truly. Dad, braved so, thou art a gentleman, and a comely, big, well-made one, and well-carried. Why," and she took him by the shoulder, and held him critically at arm's length, the better to admire, "methinks any lad—or any maid, either—"

They both laughed, and Lit, dodging a jesting paternal cuff, went again on deck.

During the voyage down, the girl's attention and affection had been divided between Diana's coach-horses and a pair of imported English stock horses which seemed to have been consigned to the sloop from the English brig at Charles Town.

They were within a day's sail of Savannah when, going down to feed and make much of these humble friends one morning, she found in charge of them the young man of the tap-room episode. He looked considerably the worse for wear, and had evidently been on a prolonged drinking bout during the entire voyage. Lit bade him good morning very civilly, but with some disapproval in her manner.

"Be them your horses?" she asked, sharply.

"They belong to my employer," answered the young man.

"Well, then," returned Lit, "your employer's horses have been mighty poorly looked after this voyage, young man, and I should advise him to put somebody in charge of 'em that cares more for beasts than you appear to."

"I have been sick," explained the young man, pen-

itently. "I should not have supposed that I would be seasick again, but these small coast boats do ride so crank."

"Oh! the boats ride crank, do they?" returned Lit, scornfully, patting the tall gray mare's velvety nose, and giving her a carrot from her pocket. "Well, 'tis my opinion, young man, that your sickness had naught to do with water."

"I remember you now," the other said, suddenly. "You are the young woman who so defended Mistress Chaters —"

"Hush," interrupted Lit, "the lady is not ten feet from you. For the Lord's sake, have you been too — sick — to know that you were in the same boat with her?"

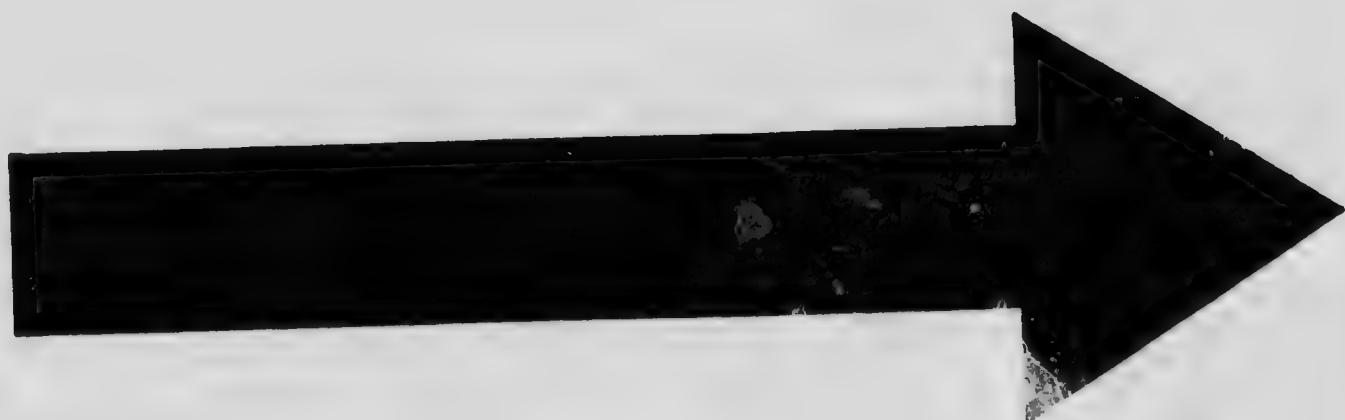
"Well," he persisted, "you are the young woman I saw at the Boar's Head in Charles Town, and I met your father this morning on the boat. Your name is Buccleugh, is it not?"

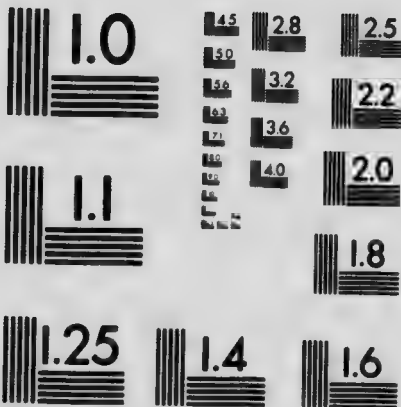
"Why, yes, I reckon 'tis," returned Lit, "when Dad chooses to twist his tongue to say it that way."

"And mine," supplied the young man, "is Francis Bennerworth. I do not live in Savannah, but south of it."

"Nor do I live in Savannah," interrupted Lit, shortly, "but down below St. Simon's, and almost to Augustine." And she turned abruptly, and started toward the rude companionway. She had an old grievance against herself that any well-looking, pleasant-spoken man could beguile her judgment, however obvious and notorious his faults.

"I am glad you like my horses," Bennerworth called after her, "although you so much detest their keeper."





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"The horses," retorted Lit, over her shoulder, "are decent, sober bodies, who do not allow themselves to be debauched."

When she came up on deck they had sighted Tybee Island. Sir Paris stood shivering in a great cloak with multitudinous capes and pocket flaps, all furred and fastened with silver clasps like a fine lady's garment.

"I do not see but that the country looks well enough," Lit heard Diana's voice say sharply, as she came on deck.

"'Tis a most desolate land," whined Sir Paris, "all so curiously flat, and like a — like a desert."

"Well," retorted Diana, "if it were a desert, and, for good, sound, and sufficient reasons of my own I chose to go there, I should go, my dear uncle; the appearance of the thing should not daunt me."

"No doubt you are right," sighed Sir Paris; "you are very like your father before you. When he decided upon a thing, it became immediately righteous and holy. 'Tis a most fortunate arrangement, and well for them who have it; but I have it not. I am aware that my judgment is fallible; and I think it possible that I might make a mistake now and again."

Diana knitted her brows over this irony. Having conned a speech which should intimate that her uncle never did anything but make mistakes, she was about to return to the charge with it, when Lit came up and interrupted.

"'Tis a brave coast, is it not, Sir Paris? Inland, there are great savannahs, where, with a good horse, you may gallop from dawn till dark; and there is

food for your horse underfoot and water for him at stations all along the way. I love this country."

"Probably because you were born in it, my dear young woman," returned Sir Paris, wearily. "To those who are used to the trim gardens of Albion, or even the cultivation of our lately forsaken home in the Carolinas, this land seems but strange and unfriendly."

The two girls were deep in a discussion of the probabilities of Diana's finding entertainment at the inn; and so little was Sir Paris's exordium marked that he, deciding that neither young woman cared at all whether the land pleased him or not, went below to his cabin to make himself beautiful against the landing.

CHAPTER V.

A TALE TOLD IN THE DARK

"O HAUD your tongue, my lily lesome thing,
Let a' your mourning be;
Ye'se ne'er be buried in Scottish ground,
Its streams ye'll nae mair see;
I brought you away to punish you,
For breaking your vows to me."

IT was the wagon yard of an inn in Savannah. The evening air held some chill; a great fire had been built near the centre of the enclosure, and about it lay a motley company of Indians, negroes, Scots, English, fisherfolk, and the ordinary run of tavern loafers, such as might be found at inns or trading-posts of that time and place.

Around the edges of the brightness where the dark night seemed to set a wall, there leaped into sight now and then, as the fire flickered, one vehicle or another, one horse or another, for the fenced enclosure was lined with these, wheeled to its edges, or munching at racks. It revealed thus fitfully a lumbering old coach or two, and many specimens of that clumsy cart which might still be seen in the region twenty years ago, whose wheels were made from sections sawn out of tree-trunks, and whose unloaded weight upon a sandy road was quite sufficient for a stout horse. Near the group around the

fire, tied to a stake and well supplied with green marsh hay, was a black steed of remarkable size and beauty.

Upon the same side of the fire there sprawled a tall old man, black-eyed, with the bearded lip of a prophet or an Emir, dirty, unkempt, yet despite all this, and his swagger and vociferous bragging, with something in his lines and in his port that bespoke good blood. This was the black stallion's master, Dad Buckaloo, returned with gusto to his ordinary, after the brief throw-back of his late voyage down from Charles Town.

General Oglethorpe was not in Savannah, but was hourly expected up from the forts below. Diana had found no better lodging for herself and her establishment than that afforded by this small and primitive inn. Below-stairs a group of young officers were supping noisily in the main parlour, so that the chambers assigned to the Chaters party were above and overlooking the wagon-yard.

Bennerworth, who leaned beside Buckaloo in the firelight, had just concluded with Dad a low-spoken compact that Diana's affairs should remain unmentioned by them in Savannah, adding the information that he had been at pains to find that neither Captain Stirkey nor the sailors on board — if they had any knowledge of the affair — had identified their beautiful young passenger as its protagonist.

"Aye," murmured Buckaloo, "it shall not be told by me." Presently he added, "You may say what you will about interrupted weddings; 'tis them that are not prevented that are the worst happenings. I would I had seen this one. 'Twas a brave sight, I warrant me, and a brave speech the bride made

when she stood on the altar steps and spoke out her mind to the company. She's a lass o' spirit — a lass o' spirit!"

"They tell me," remarked Bennerworth, in as low a tone, "that she's like to kill Cameron."

A woman who had been sitting near Buckaloo, raised her head, and one saw the features of Lit, as she said, angrily, yet in a guarded tone, "They say it because she has no man to speak for her."

Buckaloo threw back his head and laughed. "She's a better man hersel' than Sir Ringlets," he asseverated, with many oaths. "But she might be that and be no man at all."

He turned to give a push with his foot to an Indian squaw crouching near the fire. "Go rub the horse down, thou," he said to her, "and see that his halter be well fastened; he'll stir things hereabouts if he get loose."

Now there arose a sudden outcry and scurrying in the direction of the inn. A man's tall figure leaped from the doorway, hotly pursued by a half-dozen others; the party was that group of young officers who had been supping in the down-stairs parlour. The fugitive made straight for the fire; the group about it, upon his side, shrank apart; he sprang lithely into the circle of light, rose like a bird and cleared the blaze in one flying leap, running into the outer darkness with a derisive challenge to those after him.

Lit got an impression of the lad as he flew over the great heaps of blazing brands. He was above six feet, broad shouldered, wearing only breeches and shirt, and with a tousle of short flaxen curls flying about his flushed, laughing face; for the

heavy gold-laced coat and formal tie-wig had been removed in after-supper relaxation. He held some shining thing — evidently the object of pursuit — high in his right hand as he ran, shouting gay challenge and defiance.

"Who gets it may have it," he called back out of the darkness; and Lit saw, though she guessed that no other did, the bright thing rise, describe a long parabola, and seem to fall within an upper window of the inn.

"That fellow comes of thy blood, Lit," old Buck-aloo said, admiringly. "None but an Indian could leap so."

The pursuers were balked; one or two of them in their mad onrush had stepped in the coals and scorched their toes. "Babe Marshall, you deil," shouted one of them, "come back — we're not going to follow you through the fires of Tophet for that thing. Come back!"

Being adjured in many voices and many keys to return, the young man, who had circled about in the darkness, called from the doorway of the inn in a very breathless yet wholly derisive voice, and the half-dozen young blades turned and rushed after him pell-mell. Evidently they found that the object of their search had been disposed of; there was the sound of some good-natured scuffling as the tall young man was searched; then the voices died away into the general murmur of sound which came from the lighted inn, and Dad had leisure to listen to Lit, who was muttering resentfully that the man might be an Indian, but he was surely of a new breed, and that she wished for her part her eyes were as blue and her skin as white.

"Lord, Lord," commented the old man, "isn't that a wench all through! A lad cannot shoot through the air with such speed but she will give you the colour of his eyes — aye, and be ogling his heels as he goes over."

Buckleugh had come just to the garrulous stage of his potations, and now settling down, he turned more fully to the circle about the fire, and reverted to the matter of interrupted marriages.

"I could tell you a tale," he said, "of a wedding that was balked once in Scotland. Aye, in Scotland it was, and when I was a young man. Would you like to hear the story?"

There came varying forms of assent and invitation from Dad's cronies in the circle, and a Scotch sailor called, "Spin your yarn, Buckaloo; 'twill be all lies, yet none the less good hearing for that. But give us some drink before you set in; lies are sometimes dry work for those who listen to them."

Lit left the fire and went swiftly toward the door leading to the tap-room, whence it seemed her name was called. She met on the way a servant who informed her that the lady, Diana Chaters, in the up-stairs parlour of the inn, desired to speak with her.

You might have fancied that his daughter's departure removed some constraint from the old man — were it conceivable for him to feel constrained by any laws human or divine.

"Ha! a brave yarn I'll spin you," he cried, "the story of Alexander Buckleugh's marriage. But lad," turning to Bennerworth, "you're no drinkin'. 'Twill take more than James Oglethorpe — much as he is

— to keep good rum out of my jug. Drink, man, while you can come by it." And thereafter, as he talked, he sedulously plied the younger man with liquor.

"I mind me well the time," he began, "I was home again in Scotland, after ten years' absence. I mind the feel of the air and the look of the sky. There was a mist on Ben Cronach. I have ever when there was a veil on this my mountain, that was something toward in my own affairs. I told me, at the landing, of a grand wedding-gate at the castle. I wore the clothing in which I had been washed ashore, — a seaman's suit, and something of the dirtiest."

"Were you ever a sailor, Buckaloo?" inquired the Scotchman, significantly. It was a question which touched very nearly that rumour to which Captain Stirkey had alluded when the hanging of Stede Bonnet and his crew was under discussion on the voyage down.

"Was I ever a sailor?" roared old Dad. "Do you get down on your marrow-bones, matey, and thank God this night that you be not called to meet upon the high seas such a sailor as I was."

"A shipwrecked mariner you were, then, come home to your father's halls," agreed the other, with a grin.

"Aye, and wore," Buckaloo went on, "shipwrecked clothing. My hair was unkempt — a horse's mane — as the wind whipped it about my eyes. My beard was then, even as you see it now, the beard o' an Esau. A pretty figure for a bridegroom, say you? Yea, a figure to fill the eye of a lily-white bride in her paduasoy and laces!

"The day was falling as I came up to the castle, but there were no lights set out greatly, and there was no stir of preparation. Word was that the old man in dying had said the banns should be cried on the Sabbath after his going; and that would have brought the marriage itself to take place this day at high noon.

"But would he wed my bride at noonday? Not he! He had not dared, even though the story went that I had been hanged in chains six months gone.

"Of whom do I speak? Of my brother. My elder by a year, he held thereby the estates, and sucked up all the honours which should have been mine. But, by God! nature knew her own; and when I came, a sturdier shoot upon the ancestral tree, she dowered me with all he coveted. The taller and the stronger since I can remember, I could ever overthrow him in a wrestling-bout — and did so till he would cope with me no more. For the girl, Jean Dalkeith — called by the title of Lady, but without a doit to feed her — she came, as poor kin ever come to a Scotch castle. A slim little lass — I see her yet. I was a big braw lad of twelve, my brother older by a year and shorter by a head, a cruel, fawning, ill-favoured lout."

He bent his brooding gaze upon the coals; and the yard was silent save for the munching of horses, the occasional stamping of a hoof, and the gentle falling in of a brand, for the fire was come to the quiet of middle age.

"Aye, she glowed like a heat-white lily in our dark old home. Poor kin — you would mind me? Nay, no princess of the royal blood had been offered more devotion. My mother, growing then very

feeble — she died within the year — must have her ever in sight. My father, who was of my make and a man of few words to most, would tell her tales by the hour, or lead her in his hand, or set her before him on his tall red horse when he went abroad.

“Ogilvie, who comes from my part, says,” went on the old man, enjoyingly, “that my brother loved but her always, and for her sake never wed. Every servant in the house, every retainer in the clan, worshipped her. She was a queen among us. Naught was good enough for her.

“Yet, was there one thing good enough — and too good. As a child she was my thrall, body and soul. I gave her never soft words nor slaving caresses, as he did, poor mawkish fool! I asked her never, ‘Wilt thou?’ ’Twas ever, ‘Thou shalt.’ And when I chose to be stern with her, she who queened it with the other would come creeping to my side, and own with tears any fault I saw fit to tax her with. Yea, and offer for it most sweet reparation.

“When she was come a maid, the tale was still the same. It seemed a power went out from that still pale girl that made men mad for her. Lord! we had gallants of all degrees moping and mewling about the castle, six deep. For me, ’twas gay sport to watch them, who knew I had but to raise finger and my lady would come trembling to me like a hound to heel. And what made the game go merrier in my sight was my brother’s writhings. No bonnet-laird so loutish but the poor-spirited thing flushed and went pale and shook at the

thought: 'Now comes the man who takes her from us.'

"'Twas on my birthnight, when I came of age, he worked his courage to the sticking-point, and made me the grand offer. I was not then as you see me now; I was a man to fill a woman's eye, — a bold lover and a domineering. Comes he to my chamber, then, where I stood dressed for my birthnight fête, twiddling my laces and my jewels before a mirror, and hems and haws, and finally spits out that she's not happy; that her heart's mine; that she will none other; that he cannot bear to see her suffer — *he canna* — d'ye mind! Says he, with a canting whine in his voice, 'I stand between you and the title, brother, I stand between you and the estates; but here, in her heart, you have all that I would crave. I would with glee fare forth a beggar, an she went content beside me — nay, I would go forth without her, did she bide happy by my act.'

"'Go, then!' I told him. 'And cease to prate of it.'

"'Our father will not have it so,' whines the heepocrite.

"'Aye, will he not?' says I. 'Why, then, our father hath too many sons, methinks.'

"'Sandy —' he began, going back to our boyhood names to cozen me.

"'Nay, call me Esau,' I says to him, 'for I see you would persuade me to traffic in my birthright.'

"'I will not call you out of your name, Alexander,' he answers me. 'But you shall hear what I have to offer you. Make her happy. Wed her,

and you shall live here, the lord in fact so long as we both last. Should you die first —

"I roared in his face at the words, and looked his puny body up and down, and roared again. 'I die before thee!' says I. And then once more, like that, '*I die before thee!*'

"His face was white, but he made shift to get on and say that, losing her, he would never wed. That if he died before me the chieftainship was mine; and if he did not (whereat I grinned again) why, my children should inherit.

"God's blood! It drove me mad to hear him brag of this which should all have been mine, and parcel out a beggar's portion of't to proffer me! Me, to live a pensioner upon him! Me, to wed because of his pleasure — or the pleasure of any man living!

"'I spare you a blow,' says I, at last, 'because I would not kill the heir to lands I should inherit, and if I struck you now I should do no less than kill. Know then, my lord, who strut into authority before the title's yours, that I'll not wed Miss Mawkin to pleasure you. But mind that *she belongs to me*. Think not that I release my grip upon mine own. I go now out of this house that has been my fathers' for a thousand years. I do not go down to those fools below, who would make merry on account of my majority — *my majority!* What means my coming of age? A heritage of injustice and wrong. I will go forth, just as I am, and with my two bare hands delve out a fortune for myself — and for her. See that you aspire not to her while I am away. I, to trust to your love-sick mouthings! Not wed? Yea, lightly

uttered! And when I'd set myself up as your heir — *your* heir, hell and damnation have you! — you'd buckle to some wench and fill the house with brats.'

"Yah!" the old man laughed, reminiscently, "his white face was good to see! I thrust by him, and out of the house, just as I was, without waiting for my peruke to be tied, still in my dancing-pumps, the while he ran to fetch our father — Jean Dalkeith — the priest — to entreat with me. 'Twas a chill, raw evening, and rain was falling. Ere any from the castle reached me, I mounted horse and rode.

"Of my life for the six years which followed, 'tis not in my mind to tell you now — 'twould make a brave tale for a winter's fireside. I was sometimes aloft, and sometimes brought low; and I learned to know that oftentimes cutthroats and pirates are men, and those who pass by that name and try their betters in courts of law, are mice.

"But I set out to spin you the yarn of my homecoming, and an interrupted wedding. I won to the door drenched, dripping, mud-spattered, in rags. There was a new servant at the entrance who would fain have barred my way, but I flung him across the hall, where he lay quiet. Then on up into the chapel — O, I knew the way — an instinct led me.

"God, but they turned pale faces toward me! Father Paulus — I knew him by his voice before I saw him — stood in his dirty gown, prepared to make them one. And my brave brother — his knees smote together that I thought he would have fallen. Then he drops her hand, claps a paw to his head, and cries out, 'The dead is alive!'

"With the noise, turns Jean. Her face went whiter

than her gown, and she whispers my name twice. There were not above a dozen guests. I stretched out my hand to her as she stood shaking, and said just the bare word, 'Come!'

"One fellow, with the spirit of a man in him, drew sword. Mine eyes were in her eyes, and I saw him not; but I heard the ring of steel, and then my brother crying, 'Put up the blade! 'Tis Alexander returned from the dead.'

"I made no motion still, but once more bade her, 'Come!' With a shudder, she disparted herself from her would-be bridegroom — who still held her hand, as bidden by the priest — then, with a hesitating step, as of one who tries an uncertain bridge, she halted toward me. Many times in her slow, strange progress to my arms, she halted — and shuddered — and drew back. When she did so, I spoke, for I could see her eyes no more — her white face was over her shoulder, her gaze set upon her craven bridegroom, her white lips apart as though she begged of him, 'Forgive.'

"And still I commanded, and still she faltered toward me till almost in my clasp. I went one pace to her and drew my arm about her, then faced them all. 'I have come for my wife,' I cried, 'and I take her, from this den of thieves.'

"Then comes my craven brother, truckling with, 'Brother — brother!' and, 'We thought you dead.' He promised, an I would lie at the castle the night, the priest should, when our banns were cried and I in more suitable garb, say for me the words which had well-nigh been said for him. He called on God to witness that he never meant me treachery.

"I cast his insults back in's teeth. Lie under

his roof and hope to wake this side the Styx? — not such a fool was I. I drew my wife away, and seated her, with her bridal white and floating veil, behind me on the good horse they brought, all in the sullen dripping dark, though guests and hosts and all howled remonstrances and invitation after, and set my face toward the sea.

“I could feel her slight arms tremble where they clasped me; and as we passed through the gate, she hung her head, and burst into foolish sobs. ‘Nay, nay, my girl,’ says I, ‘there’s water enough abroad to-night; swallow the tears — they please me not.’ And I brought her down to the coast and so on to the new world.”

The latter part of this tale was told as to unseen auditors. The great voice had grown hollow, a voice reaching the hearer’s ear through caverns of the past. The old hate had flamed and burned out in those black eyes, leaving a smouldering coal, of meaning indecipherable. Now, the conclusion found a ring of strangely — and as variously — moved faces, played upon by the aging fire.

The Scotch sailor (who knew that castle of which Buccleugh spoke, and had heard wild tales of those wanderings so lightly mentioned by him who had been through them) leaned forward with shrewd gray eyes set upon the old man’s enigmatic face, and, in the silence following the story’s close, inquired:

“Will your daughter inherit, then, d’ye say? — or does your brother keep faith?”

A moment, the fire whispered and flickered, and the horses munched, stamped, or shifted; then, “Lit’s no daughter of Jean Dalkeith’s,” quoth Buc-

cleugh, roughly. "She — Jean — was" — his eyes searched the circle about the fire for sight of Lit. He had observed her departure, or the tale had been otherwise told — or not at all. Not finding her, he went on, "She was a puling, pining thing, Jean Dalkeith, who gave me no bairns. Lit is the daughter of a Creek woman!"

"Yon's child?" cried the sailor, with a jerk of his thumb toward the squaw, who had come back during the recital, and now squatted glowering malignantly, and showing — though reputed to understand no English — a notable disrelish for the entertainment.

Before Buccleugh could answer, Bennerworth, whose cup the old man had watchfully kept filled all evening, but whose mobile countenance was tremblingly alive to every turn of the story, cried out, "No — never — surely not!"

Weeping Moon (who comprehended no English) gave him a black look, and old Dad burst out laughing. The dark mood which the telling of his tale had brought upon him, vanished before the humour of the situation. "And why for no, young sir?" he roared, jovially. "Is not she fair enow to be the mother of Venus's self? Speak out — she knows not thy tongue."

But Bennerworth applied himself sulkily to the rum, muttering that the hag might know not English, but, for his own part, he understood looks; and he discreetly said no more upon the subject of Lit's descent.

It was the old man who continued it with, "Well, as it happens, you're right enough. Lit's mother —" he glanced up, upon the chance that the

girl might be within earshot, raised his voice and added, "Lit's mother was a Creek, of the Yamacraws, old Toma-chi-chi's own granddaughter — good blood," and he chuckled, for allusions to poor Lit's savage ancestry never failed to stir her easily roused temper.

The daughter's charm, the liquor with which the father had plied him, conspired to render Bennerworth's view of Lit's situation acutely doleful, and his large emotional eyes filled with quick tears. "The — the tale you told was a sad one," he explained, apologetically, as he wiped them away.

Buccleugh grunted. "Let's to the horses, and talk trade," he suggested.

Above-stairs, Lit found Diana in spirits somewhat improved by her voyage and her rude, novel surroundings. On the stairs she had passed the hero of the fire episode, now in his coat and wig, and looking very imposing despite that youthful blond beauty which had caught her quick eye in the instant of his apparition. He was earnestly inquiring of one of the inn servants as to the probable whereabouts of that bright thing he had thrown toward the building.

The girl saw him put a piece of money into the man's hand as she passed, and heard him say, "'Twas the picture of an infant, painted in colours, with a gold frame about it, and shut in a gold lid. The thing is of more value to me than merely the gold upon it, since it is my own portrait done in infancy, and has my name engraved upon the lid, 'Robert Marshall,' with the address at Jamestown, Virginia, though as I am here with General Oglethorpe now, you would have no trouble in finding

me at the barracks. I trust it may be recovered, and I will pay well whosoever brings it to me."

When the girl entered the upper parlour, Diana looked around from something which she was closely scanning by the light of the candle upon the tall mantel. Lit recognised it, partly from her glimpse of it, and partly from the owner's just heard description. She realised that the locket must have fallen through the window, and was told almost immediately that it had indeed dropped into the lady's lap as she sat by an open casement.

While Lit was explaining that she knew the locket's owner, who was even then searching for it, and that she would assist in its return, Diana continued to gaze at the picture. It was the face of a sturdy boy of two, blue-eyed, pink-cheeked, with rebellious rings of flaxen hair striving to escape from the close cap that held them down.

Something which the artist had caught in the calm regard of those baby eyes, laid hold upon Diana's heart. "'Tis odd," she murmured, half to herself, and half to the other, as she and Lit stood looking down at the picture. "It is strange to me how familiar the child's face seems. He must look like our family—I have infant pictures of my brothers, and some of my cousins. But no, the Chaters children are many of them gray-eyed, but none fair-skinned like this; yet I have seen the face—or one most like it. Do you ever feel," she added, turning to the girl at her shoulder, "that certain people belong to you? Just when you first see them, I mean—or, like this, when you see a picture of them?"

"That I do," and Lit laughed mellowly. "I

never see a proper gallant, as was the owner of that picture there, without just some such feeling as you tell about."

Diana pushed the miniature into Lit's hand with a gesture of disrelish; her wounds were yet too fresh for the word gallant not to grate upon her ear. She turned to the table where a bundle of quills, an ink-horn, and sand-box lay, inquiring eagerly:

"Lit, could you — or your father — carry a letter for me to the Isle of Hope, on your way southward?"

"We be not going for two weeks," returned Lit, "or mayhap longer, if the humour takes Dad to stay here. Old Toma-chi-chi, the Mico of the Yamacraws, who have their town four miles to the west of Savannah, is very near his last. He is ninety-seven years old, Mistress, and he and Dad are friends. Dad says sometimes that my mother was the old Mico's daughter — or granddaughter — and sometimes he tells other stories about it. Anyhow, I think he will not go while the old man lasts; and that may be a week, or it may be a month. But with flood tide in the morning goes the guard-boat out to Skidaway. 'Tis roundabout, but I could take your letter down that way. I know most of the boys that be on guard duty, and Captain Jones is a very good friend of mine. Write your letter, and I can put in word of mouth for you, d'ye see?"

Diana turned to the table and lifted from it a small packet, which contained what she had already written to Hastie.

"There is the letter," she said; "I thank you very much for your offer. I might send it down by the guard-boat, of course, without troubling

you; but — though I will not have you beg of my Cousin Hastie for me — mind that — I believe that you might tell her certain things which would — would make a difference.”

Lit took the packet and made her adieus. On her way down-stairs she stopped at the supper-room and inquired for Lieutenant Robert Marshall. Being told that he was not there, and surmising that he was still upon the hunt for his locket, she passed down into the wagon-yard once more, and looked keenly about for her father and Bennerworth, whom she missed from the circle about the fire, where the humbler guests of the inn still lay drinking and yarn-spinning.

She found the two, finally, drawn apart from the others, and deep in a horse-trade, the object of which seemed to be the purchase by Buckaloo of the stock horses that the young man had brought down from Charles Town.

Lit's attention was arrested by her first sight of Bennerworth. In truth, the young man had, after their first meeting, made some changes in his toilet with a view to pleasing her eye. As the talk proceeded toward a bargain which would give her father the coveted animals at a ludicrously inadequate price, Lit was absorbed in noting the grace with which the young man bore himself, and the bewitching tangle of curls that, unpowdered and unconfined by any ribbon, fell over his coat collar, a mass of bronzy brightness.

“Deuce take me for a fool,” the girl muttered, “that cannot keep my eyes off a good-looking man; and then, when the lads come bothering, have as much to-do to be rid of them.”

Now she discovered that Bennerworth had been drinking more than was good for him. He was talking loud and boastfully, and Lit guessed that his horse-trading would suffer by his indulgence. He was scarcely soberer than he had been upon the voyage down, though able now to keep his feet and an upright position. She felt a qualm of reluctance that her father should take advantage of a man in his condition. And yet the horses were a seductive prize, and old Dad was doing no more than every horse-trader does, unless, indeed, he had himself gotten the young man drunk for this purpose. Well aware that interference was likely to make Bennerworth's case worse rather than better, she turned aside and said nothing.

A few steps away, she met the miniature's owner, and delivered up the bauble to him. A swift glance at the girl's face showed the young officer that money would not be an appropriate reward. "And who am I to thank — by name — for the return of my locket?" he asked, smiling so that two dimples revealed themselves in the pink of his cheeks. "I am glad it fell into hands so fair and so kind."

A sudden impulse made Lit say to him, in a tone which was almost grave, "You have a very beautiful young lady to thank — not myself — Heaven forbid that I should call myself so," as he bowed low, and seemed about to identify her with the description. "'Tis a lady, indeed, and she fell so in love with the picture in your trinket that I had some ado to get it from her. You may well enjoy the compliment," as Marshall blushed and smiled, "for 'tis still a good likeness." And she



"**A**ND WHO AM I TO THANK...FOR THE
RETURN OF MY LOCKET?"



ran away laughing to begin her preparations, having guessed instinctively that the lieutenant's boyish appearance was a sore subject with him, and shrewdly suspecting that this was the reason for the scuffle over the miniature.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SILENT LADY

"It's I misca'd my luve, my dear;
I lichtlied him wi' meikle spight;
And now nae kame s'all kame my hair,
In my bower ye'se see nae fire nor light,
Nor s'all ae word pass my cruel lip mair
Till hame s'all coom my ain true knight."

HASTIE WYNNEWOODE, christened by the old ancestral name, Haste-thee, and known more generally as the Silent Lady, stood in the parlour of Wynnewoode Hall giving her orders to her under farmer. She was a tall and stately woman, somewhere between thirty and forty years of age, with a clear, bold profile, a glowing eye, and a cheek whose ruddy smoothness bespoke much open air and wholesome familiarity with nature.

The communication with her assistant went forward orally for his part; the lady held a small slate tablet upon which she wrote and from which he read. The reason for the silence of the Silent Lady (a silence purely voluntary, it was understood, and if one might judge, wilful) was lost in that past which had not been lived near Savannah; and the strange fact of her not using the voice

which she undoubtedly possessed remained a subject of mystery, myth, and apocrypha.

She had certainly carried her tablet of slate or ivory ever since she came to this country; and it was well-known that not even in the darkness, where her mode of communication was impossible, was her voice ever raised. That she was one of the most efficient proprietors and Wynnewoode one of the best administered plantations of the region, was also a matter of public knowledge. People of intelligence probably supposed her to be dumb. To those sufficiently intimate or sufficiently venturesome to inquire or remonstrate in regard to the matter, she stated in writing that there was such a superabundance of women spending their breath in empty talk, that she had, for her part, some years before, decided to cease. And she usually added that she did not miss her voice in the least, nor did she suppose that her friends would do so.

"If Bennerworth is not come with those horses, I wish that you and Peter Milchett would take the small periagua and go up to Savannah to see what is the matter," she wrote upon her tablets, in a light, rapid hand.

She glanced up, but the big Englishman was not looking. His eyes of china blue were fixed on something outside the window, and he was grinning foolishly. The Silent Lady tapped her slate impatiently with the pencil, and drew a sweeping dash beneath what she had written. Shave's opaque gaze came reluctantly down to the tablet.

"But Muster Bunnerworth, 'e's back," he answered, having read. "I seen um go apast 'ere jist the minute; but I misdoubt me if 'e brought any

horses. Fa-a-ct is, I war down at the landin' when he coome, and I ne'er saw hoof o' horse with um."

The Silent Lady passed the yokel, Shave, swiftly. The raising of horses upon this model plantation of hers, in a land where horses were scarce and brought a fabulous price, had been her pride and her delight, — her pride as a business woman and her delight as an individual. The thought that this pair for which she had sent to her old home in England had come to any harm through the carelessness of an employé could not be borne. She started toward the stables to ascertain the exact facts in the case, but before she had taken many steps, a young man appeared in the doorway, where he stood swaying gently from side to side and smiling benevolently at space. It was the Bennerworth of whom she had asked, and it was also the young man whose shapely figure, laughing gray eyes, and auburn curls, had taken Lit's fancy when he erupted into the Boar's Head and told the tale of Diana Chaters's outburst of fury and despair on her homecoming, the day of her jilting; whom she had chaffed on the way down; and admired when in the Savannah inn yard he stood talking to her father. Just at present he was even more thoroughly intoxicated than he had been the night before.

Up to this time, to drink at all had been to lose your place upon the Silent Lady's model plantation. If Hail Wynnewoode had ever boasted of anything, it could easily have been her boast that in this rude frontier community, where every man might be at some time a drunkard, a thief, a pirate, she had built up a staff of employés which included no drunkards, no shirks, and none but practical farmers.

And the Silent Lady was herself the ablest farmer of them all.

What the charm was which preserved Bennerworth from reproof or discharge, it would have been impossible for those about Hastie to guess. A lingering, haunting resemblance to a face which she had never forgotten, a trick in the turn of his eyes, the manner in which he lifted a cup from the board, the action with which he bent forward to listen, or threw his head back to laugh, any of these brought a rush of old memories that melted her harsh resolution to water, and left him still trusted where another had been long since sent to the right about.

"Where are your horses?" she wrote now upon the tablet, and held it before the wandering and bibulous eye of this one of her retainers who had been forgiven so many unforgivable sins that his fellows had come to call him (in secure privacy, and in some secret terror), "the pet."

The answer was a series of smiles and head-shakings which appeared to have a maddening effect upon Hastie. She bore down upon Bennerworth in silent wrath, and held the slate within six inches of his nose, tapping it violently and jerking it about till no man, however sober, could have read anything written upon it, to the great and manifest delight of Shave. Bennerworth was, as has been said, a lithe and boyish looking man, somewhat less in stature than Hastie herself; yet as he clung and swayed in the doorway, now abashed at his employer's stormy demonstrations, now fulminating a whole battery of propitiatory smiles wherewith to meet them, he pretty nearly occupied it.

Hastie, despairing of any coherent reply, brushed

past him — loosening his affectionate clasp upon the lintel and nearly bringing him to the ground as she did so — and stalked across the yard to the stables to investigate for herself. Fond of comfort in her dressing, she habitually wore a garment not unlike a priest's cassock, which buttoned down below her firm, well-cut chin to a skirt short enough to display frankly a pair of stout buckled shoes on slender, aristocratic feet.

The stable-yard was a sort of open court, with a pump and watering-trough in its centre instead of a fountain. When Hastie stalked back, a tragic figure in the May sunshine, — since she had found in the stable saddle and bridle, but no horses, — Bennerworth was leaning against a hitching-post near the pump, waiting for her.

Tennyson, in our later day, is authority for the combination of a "whelpless eye," so that one, following his lead in matters figurative, may say that when the Silent Lady turned upon Bennerworth the glare of her horseless eye, he blenched somewhat.

He had some money in his hands, and as she came up he thrust it unsteadily forward, and dropped upon the ground a little shower of coins.

"I sol' 'em," he announced, fatuously. "There's seventy-five guineas for you, and five for me — to pay me for my trouble — pay me for my trouble — an' much obliged to me."

Hastie's rigid fingers refused the coins and grasped her slate. "Have you sold my horses?" she wrote.

"O, I worked 'em off. Yes, I worked 'em off," smiled Bennerworth, as he subsided against the pump and napped a bit.

"Who made you drunk — runagate villain that

he was — and got my horses from you?" wrote Hastie, and held it before his dreamy eyes to no avail.

"What ragamuffin — what market-beater — what Paul's man hath my horses?" she pencilled, with wrathful energy.

"Yes, O, yes," muttered the somnolent Bennerworth; "make a pother, now. You 'most knocked me down awhile ago."

Hastie's temper, always to be described by her name, and brittle besides, had been breaking up at intervals during the entire episode. The things she fain would have uttered had jammed the flood-way of her rage. She clutched wildly at her slate; it slipped its moorings and fell shivering upon the stones at her feet. She stared at it for an instant. Her sole method of speech was denied her at this trying moment; but not, as it appeared, all forms of expression.

She advanced upon the culprit, her muscular, capable-looking hands outstretched. They fell as though predestined upon his coat collar. She ran him glibly forward to the brink of the horse-trough, where he hung astonished and gasping. There she paused. But as a mutter arose from his downheld face of, "Be some folks would question the wisdom o' — o' Methuselah himself!" she lifted him, in an access of fury, poised him deftly, and soused him not once nor twice, but thrice, head-first into the trough, setting him half-drowned and wholly sobered, against a post, and regarding him with her usual air of quiet severity.

Shave was standing behind the latticed gate of the courtyard, hugging himself in silent ecstasies,

and swallowing the guffaws which shook him, because Hastie's ears were as keen as her discipline was perfect. Suddenly he felt a timid touch upon his arm, and a low, awed voice said:

"What's to do here?"

Looking over his shoulder, he beheld a tall, brown girl in a blue stuff dress gazing at the proceedings with round eyes. It was Lit, who according to Diana's directions had come to Wynnewoode to bring a letter to Hastie, and who failed to recognise Bennerworth in the drenched figure undergoing discipline at the Silent Lady's hands.

Lit, with her usual insight and good common sense, had guessed that such a letter as Diana would now write would be unlikely to enlist the sympathies of any disaffected person. So she had begged that a brief note be substituted for the long communication first written, and she herself empowered to relate to the mistress of Wynnewoode a proper version of what had befallen that lady's young kinswoman.

As Hastie disposed of Bennerworth and looked about her, Lit plucked up spirit to say, "I am seeking Mistress Wynnewoode; I have a letter for her."

The tall being, whom she had not classified as man or woman, came striding forward and held out an authoritative hand for the missive which Lit was in two minds about withholding or delivering. But Shave jogged her elbow, prompting awfully, "Mind your manners, young woman. This is Mistress Wynnewoode herself."

Hastie took the letter, read it, and looked inquiringly at its bearer; then seeing Shave stand, all

eyes and ears to absorb the subsequent communication, she signed Lit to follow her, and led the way to the cool, dusky parlour, without so much as a glance toward Bennerworth, where he leaned, white and sick, against the hitching-post.

Once there, she pointed first to a table with wine and biscuit upon it, and then to a chair. Lit removed her hat upon entering the house with just a man's gesture, and seated herself, declining the proffered refreshments.

Hastie again read Diana's letter through without a movement of surprise or inquiry, and laying it down on the table beside her, still sat silent.

"What did she say in her letter, mistress?" Lit asked.

For answer, Hastie pushed the sheet toward her. Lit took it in awkward, unaccustomed fingers, flushing darkly as she did so, held it upside down a moment, "O, I see," she remarked, and handed it back. "Well, then, I am to tell you the whole story, I take it." And she leaned forward in her chair, regarding the other with steady eyes, and told, with that natural eloquence which was always hers where her feelings were stirred, the story of Diana Channing's disaster.

"So that she spoiled the poor maid, among them all," she concluded, "and made a fool of her. Then comes this brute to do worse, so that she's ashamed to show her face in the town she's lived in — where this thing chanced to her — so she comes asking shelter of you."

Hastie Wynnewoode frowned, drew a fresh tablet from a desk, regarded it darkly for a moment, and then wrote:

"She may come if she likes. I will not promise to coddle her outrageous selfishness. I was just such a young fool once, and I know that she has got what she most needed."

Lit took the slate obediently, and looked earnestly at the face of the writer. In spite of its haughtiness it was a good face. In spite of the merciless self-repression it was kind. She handed the tablet back without a word. Then, "I knew you'd do the right thing, old lady," she said, putting her hand on the other's shoulder. "I knew as soon as I saw your face that you were the one to help her. Why, she's no more to blame than a poor spoilt bairn that's tipped over a milk-dish and soiled the floor round it. We must e'en get our cloths and sop up the milk, and comfort the poor baby as best we may."

This unexpected reception of her cold, half-hearted assent took Hastie somewhat aback. She swept the tablet clear of her first grudging words, and wrote upon it:

"Diana Chaters is my Cousin Hector's daughter, and I loved him very dearly. Except through report, which has little good to say of her to my way of thinking, I do not know the girl herself, but I remember her as a spoiled child — perhaps she is not worse than that now."

Again Lit went through the form of looking at the slate. Again she blushed burningly, and looked about with a humbled, pained expression.

"To tell you the truth, old lady," she burst out, finally, "I never could make aught of pothooks on paper, — or elsewhere, for the matter of that, — and so long as you can't talk, why — why, I

can't tell whether I please you or no, unless you give me a grin once in awhile."

Hastie smiled suddenly and most naturally, and Lit's mind was at ease. She began chattering with the volubility characteristic of her.

"'Tis a good child who would be coming to you now. I see your family are all of one sort, the high and mighty kind; and make it or break it, rule or ruin, each one of you must have his own way — excepting maybe the old gentleman, who would like it well enough but doth not get it."

The Silent Lady's hair was cut short — a great head of dark, plumage-like curls; and this, in an era when the dressing of women's hair had reached a comical elaboration, marked her as an eccentric. She had the hawk-like Chaters nose, and very piercing eyes, and her head and face were more nearly those of a brilliant, dominating man of thirty than a woman.

She left Lit sitting in the broad window-seat while she went to make her preparations for accompanying the messenger back to Savannah, a trip which she decided they would make overland, using the ferry to the mainland, and going horseback by the trail, which was indeed a very good road at this time. Later she stepped into the room, a tall figure clad in a scarlet riding "Joseph," and wearing a hat which, though plumed and gold-laced, was plainly a man's hat; having given her orders to her household in some ten minutes, and being then in process of drawing on a pair of gauntlets.

Lit looked at her, first in simple admiration. As she examined further, she burst out, with her great brown eyes widening and full of laughter, "Lord

be good to us, old lady! When I see that there hat over them there curls, it gets close to my weak side. If you hain't a picture of a proper young gentleman — barring the riding-skirts — why, I'm no judge; and neither them that likes me nor them that don't never said that of me. Why, 'tis hard work for me to keep from casting sheep's eyes at ye!"

Hastie's face softened, her eagle eyes and sarcastic mouth melted into a smile at the girl's saucy, good-humoured assurance. Lit was a relief and a refreshment to her. Unable to read the caustic sentences it was the elder woman's habit to write upon her slate, the girl felt almost none of the awe and shrinking of those who could do so. Where others saw only a handsome, bitter, unloving woman, Lit — ignorant, subjective as a dog — looked deeper, and divined a heart of gold which revealed itself not alone in actions, but — to her, at least — in expression as well.

Now, as the two emerged from the house on their way down to the boat, they met Bennerworth. A very sober, pale, sick Bennerworth, he stood, to intercept them, hat in hand, his uncovered hair still dark and shining from the water, but his clothes changed, and all put to rights about him.

Lit knew him now, and giving him a compassionate glance, drew somewhat behind Hastie, that his penitence might have the fewer witnesses. But Hastie never looked toward him as he began, humbly, "Mistress Wynnewoode, I have made my packets for departure from the island, but I will not offend you by going in that boat which carries yourself. I will return to the island but once more;

then it will be to bring your horses, and ask your forgiveness for that which I have done. God knows you have been kind to me; and any man may see how ill I have requited your kindness. If you feel that you cannot trust me even to get back the animals, let Peter Milchett — or Shave — go with me and see them brought home in safety.”

The Silent Lady turned and stepped quietly past him back into the office room, the others following. She sought out an ivory tablet from her desk, and wrote upon it:

“I have no reason to send Peter Milchett to Savannah. I have other work for him upon the plantation. I can trust you, Francis Bennerworth. I shall myself procure the indigo seed in Savannah. You will bring it back with you, and prepare the ground for it as I have instructed.”

Bennerworth stared blankly at the tablet for a moment after he had read what was written upon it, then he sat weakly down at the desk and looked straight ahead of him. The forbearance of this exacting woman touched some chord of self-respect which nothing had yet reached.

“I pray you send Peter Milchett,” he deprecated, finally. “When anything puts me about, I—I get to drinking. I am not worthy your pity, Mistress Wynnewoode. My own father found me not worth his, long since. Why should you trouble to rescue me who take no trouble to rescue myself?”

At this moment, Lit, passing, came within his line of vision. He started, changed colour, half rose, and would have spoken. Then he seemed suddenly to realise that she must have been present from the first, and seen all. And he sank back

again, leaning his head with its moist curls upon his hands, groaning.

The Silent Lady dropped her tablets into her pocket, and wrote upon the slate, "I say that I trust you. I never make mistakes in judgment." Then signing to Lit, both women left the room, and as the latter looked back, she saw Bennerworth, his head bowed above the written words, and guessed that he was shedding some tears which were at once bitter and salutary.

CHAPTER VII.

JAMES OGLETHORPE

"Ye gentlemen of England
That live at home, at ease,
How little do ye think upon
The dangers of the seas."

THE smack of the brine was all through the extended — and illustrious — history of the Chaters family. From the sea had come its wealth and honours, and to the sea its best and bravest had gone back. The long green wash of tropic tides covers many a proud Chaters head; the foaming white and steely blue of northern breakers, howling along coasts inhospitable, had beaten to pieces many a tall Chaters bark. It was give and take between the gallant, intrepid race and the great, groaning, asking, wallowing creature, turning from side to side, reaching, reaching, now east, now west, to its despair — the moon; crying out for lost things and things desired, swallowing all and wailing unsatisfied, unfilled.

They had held fitful and unsure empire over the sullen, bidden thing, which for a season will do man's labours, rebellion swelling big in its bosom. Anon, it revolted; it rose as the slaves rise, clapped its hands, whooped, yelled, slew, devastated, drunk

on freedom and on fury. It tossed giant arms to Heaven; it found out these insolent Chaters' upon their unavailing decks; it plucked them with its watery long hands from out their silly ships, and dashed them back upon its rocks and swallowed them down.

O, there were widows — and enough — in the Chaters family. And these widowed mothers brought up the infant sons that were left in their arms — to follow the sea! since the voice of it called them from their cradles, and no man or woman may be wiser than Fate.

The old, adventurous, brine-roving line had intermarried, as was natural, with families engaged in this traffic. The father of beautiful Polly Antrobus sent to sea more ships than any merchant of Bristol. Hastie Wynnewoode's father had been an admiral. Various and collateral branches of all the families followed the sea. The children played in infancy with wonderful shells and corals, spoil of equatorial waters, or strange lacquered toys from island towns and coast cities.

The family owed its rise to the same force which brought wealth to her who had been Lady Chaters. Both dated back to the merchant princes and adventurers of the fourteenth century, in the time of Edward III.; the days of controversy between "Merchants of the Staple," "Merchant Adventurers," and "Merchants of the House," under that prince, himself so fond of the sea, so active in promoting sea-going commerce and undertakings.

The two lines had followed this calling of the sea in somewhat different manners. Sir Hector Chaters's forebears, bold, restless, daring men, had

furnished naval commanders, explorers, conquerors of new lands, and the bones of something like half of the males of the tribe lay out somewhere under the drifting wastes on which they had so blithely hazarded.

In the Antrobus family, the mercantile instinct was more strongly developed. The wealth that was gained was kept. They were great ship-builders, ship-owners, promoters of merchant adventuring companies; but in them, as in the Chaters family, always the sea in one form or another called the men, and the tribe abounded in widows, young, old, and middle-aged.

Bristol sent to these shores England's discoverer of America, Sabastian Cabot. And when the Americas began to offer a rich commerce to the mother country, Charles Town trading direct with Bristol and Glasgow, Sir Hector, then in the first flush of adventurous manhood, and just wedded to a wife of the same temper, gathered his belongings and came to this seaport of the country whose shores he had already twice visited, certain that however excellent his fortune in the old world, he could better it in the new.

Diana had been born in America, her mother had died here, and Sir Hector's ship was lost when she was a girl of ten, in a great hurricane in West Indian waters.

Hastie Wynnewoode, at the time she left Diana in disgust six years earlier, having no considerable fortune, and the rôle of semi-dependent relative being an unbearable one to her high-mettled soul, was glad to put her small patrimony into stock, implements, and indentured servants, and take

advantage of a special grant from the trustees. Whereby, being an excellent business woman and an experienced farmer and planter, she had, in this six years, more than quadrupled her capital, and was, moreover, proprietor of one of the finest plantations in the new colony.

Wynnewoode Hall, built by her, and planned to somewhat resemble her ancestral home in Devonshire, was, for that time and place, a commodious and even luxurious dwelling. The character of its mistress was illustrated in the interior furnishings. They were plain, bare, masculine; yet there were concessions made to that elegance which she deemed her birth and breeding demanded.

The uncovered floor of beautiful Georgia pine, rubbed and waxed until its golden-brown surface would have shamed any mahogany ever touched by tool, made the foundation for the beauty of the Silent Lady's parlour.

The many-paned windows were larger than those of most houses then built, and the snowy curtains which shaded them avouched the fact that the mistress of Wynnewoode loved cleanliness. The tall chimneypiece of oak supported curious blue china cups, jars, vases, and fantastic shells, reminders that Hastie also belonged to the sea-going Chaters family. A painting which represented Hastie's father, the admiral, with a great war-ship going into battle in the background just above his shoulder; another which showed her mother with small, meek features and tightly banded hair, quite unlike her salient and assertive daughter; odd, spindle-legged chairs brought in the ships from England; a broad oaken

desk and table; — these completed its austere furnishings.

In this parlour sat one morning in October, in the year of our Lord 1739, the Silent Lady, its mistress, her cousin, Sir Paris Chaters, and their friend and guest, General James Oglethorpe, then a man of fifty-one, in appearance not more than forty, of a fine forcible bearing, yet of winning and lovable aspect. He had a very open, animated face, with high, delicate, somewhat aquiline nose, short, arched upper lip, and very large, full, eloquent eyes. It was the face of a man who could leave a home of wealth and cultivation, and friends among the brightest and best of England's great ones, to cross the ocean in little sailing-vessels and found in a wild land, among wild animals and Indians, a home — a refuge — for the oppressed of old Europe, outcasts of her bigoted realms; the poor debtor, the persecuted for conscience' sake.

The subject of conversation among these three was the placing of Diana's affairs on a practical basis; and till that young lady herself should join them, little could be done toward deciding matters. Hastie had written on her tablets, for the general, some account of the miserable affair at Charles Town. Sir Paris had, as requested, glanced at this through his glasses, nodded his head, and added details as he thought necessary.

"You will understand my position in the matter, sir," he appealed to the general. "I have less authority with my niece than I should have with yourself; for you at least might mark me while I was speaking, and take heed what words I uttered, if it were only to rail upon them. But she

actually hears me not at all, when I say aught that crosses her fancy."

The general gave smiling assent. "Young people who have not been disciplined by their parents," he said, "must frequently be disciplined by life. 'Tis often the richest nature which falls into the wildest insurrection and excesses."

Sir Paris sighed, and contemplated his immaculate finger ends. "Reasoning in that manner," he agreed, somewhat dryly, "my niece Diana certainly possesses an extremely rich character. The scenes which we had, both before and after this lamentable happening, were certainly rich in themselves."

"My memory of Sir Hector," Oglethorpe said, "leads me to think this fair daughter is her father over again, and that, had she been born a son —"

Sir Paris interrupted, lightly, "O, a man — a blade — may flicker through many a coil, and push a wild prank to a respectable conclusion. But a petticoat — when a petticoat goes snapping through such a ravel —"

There was silence for a moment, and then Sir Paris suggested, mildly:

"You think, perchance, my dear friends, that I came out quite ill in this matter."

"I do not." Hastie's pencil clicked angrily, and she held what she had written (very large) up defiantly for both men to read.

The general did not express himself. It is possible that he imagined himself would have acted differently in the circumstances, but was tolerantly willing to believe that Sir Paris had adopted the course which he did for excellent reasons.

The baronet's anxious, near-sighted eyes studied

the message, and beamed a response of gratitude to the writer. "Why, I think those who love me will say that, while not a man-queller, nor in any sense war-fain, I am not quite without manly feeling. But here, mark you, was no place for a man. I could not restrain her from the acquaintance itself in the first place, nor from the marriage which was planned. I could not march up and fight, like a hired bravo, a part for which I should have excluded from the house — had it been mine to do so."

"You were correct in your stern course," wrote Hastie, as before.

"Why, as to its being stern," deprecated the other, "I merely took to my bed — and let my niece pack me up and bring me here, as she brought other of the household gear —"

"Here comes the lady," interrupted General Oglethorpe, rising to his feet, and going forward to meet Diana as she entered.

"Diana, my dear, you remember General Oglethorpe," began Sir Paris, nervously. "The general hath been advised of your — of our distress, and he is most — most kind —" the poor baronet went on, flinchingly. It was plain he was always in fear of his niece; as evident that this fear was known to her and irritated her to displays of harshness. She came forward very graciously, first curtsying to the general, then giving him her hand.

"I remember General Oglethorpe very well," she said, "and have never known him aught but kind. The first time I saw you, sir, although I was too large a girl to do so, I sat upon your knee and begged you for sweets, and you suffered me to hear your great watch tick. I have never forgotten the

watch," with a sudden and very bewitching little smile. "You told me that the ticking was made by a lad upon the inside with a hammer, and I believed it."

"It is ever the way of our sex," returned the general, "to profess that we be able to teach the other."

"And the way of ours," returned Diana, archly, "to profess to be greatly taught. I have been looking forward," she went on, "to this interview with you. Perhaps my cousin and my uncle have told you of my most lamentable case, and how that I fled to Savannah for an asylum. I would cast in my lot here with your people. I will never willingly set foot again in Charles Town."

"We shall be glad, most assuredly," returned the general (and had she listened there was a gentle reproof in the emphasis), "for the addition of your uncle and yourself to the society of Savannah."

"I have ordered sold my house in Charles Town," she went on, unheeding, "and shall dispose of my beautiful properties, including an indigo plantation just started on the Ashley River. I shall sell the interest I have in the filature at Silk Hope. I brought my horses and my servants down. Though I know you do not permit slavery in the Georgia colony, I suppose that house servants come not within your proscription."

Sir Paris sat leaned back in his chair, watching his niece and listening with half-closed eyes to her statement of her affairs, which so belittled himself, her uncle and guardian. Hastie, her tablets in her hand, regarded all three with a sardonic smile.

"I have some worthy friends in Charles Town,"

the general observed. "I have much hope that the colony of Carolina will assist us in our expedition against the Spaniards at Augustine."

"You will have those fellows down here, you mean —" began Diana, hastily, "the militia?"

"I will if I can induce them to come," returned Oglethorpe, mildly. "The life not alone of the Georgia colony is endangered by this threat of Spanish invasion; but, as most of us believe, the entire coast is menaced. Charles Town itself may be attacked — and further up — and inland — Virginia — the colonies of New England. 'Tis no small matter to hold the gateway against a foe so powerful and so encroaching; and yet it is what Georgia, young and feeble as she is, hath set out for to do."

"I did not realise," returned Diana, thoughtfully, "that we were coming south into the very midst of a war; and yet — and yet, now it is done, I am right glad we did so. Oh, General Oglethorpe, I would I were a man! You would have one trusty blade to you."

"Aye," said the general, smiling, "and if you were such a man as your father before you, 'twould be equal to ten of the ordinary sort."

"Show her your maps, Jamie," prompted Sir Paris, dropping back into the familiar address of school-days. "I thought the tales you told me of St. Simons Island and your Highlanders were most romantical. 'Tis a story to divert a maid certainly."

General Oglethorpe drew out a roll from his pocket, spread the maps upon the table, and the four gathered about them. His heart was most engaged with the garrisoning for defence, and rendering impregnable, this beautiful coast with its wonderful

chain of sea islands, and once launched upon the theme he talked well and earnestly; Diana Chaters putting in now and again a comment or suggestion pregnant and pointed, or asking a question which brought forward the fact that her keen mind had well-nigh grasped entire his scheme and its possibilities.

"This colony of Georgia," the general said, "bridles the Spaniard in America, and defends the English American frontiers. Spain's policy is ever a double dealing one. In Augustine they welcome runaway slaves from the English colonies; the more, if the negroes have murdered their masters. They have made a regiment of them, officers and all, on the footing and pay of their regular army."

Sir Paris's long white fingers dropped very lightly, but suddenly, on Oglethorpe's arm, and his soft voice interrupted with, "Will you taste this East India of Cousin Hastie's with me, Jamie?"

But as the general looked up in surprise, Sir Paris's glance silently led him to where Junius, tray in hand, stood arrested and listening intently.

With an almost imperceptible nod of intelligence to Sir Paris which merged itself into the bow as he took his glass of wine, Oglethorpe resumed.

"It is the policy of both France and Spain to exterminate the English confederated Indians, without regard to treaty. These tribes surround us, they are our bulwark, and if the Spanish be allowed to destroy them one by one in times of peace, the colonies, at the first war, must fall as ripe grain to their sickle."

"With Spain 'tis always war," Diana commented, sharply. "Her peace is ever sheer treachery."

"These Indians come to me — poor children — for protection. They long since swore allegiance to the king, and they offer me always their fighting men, good soldiers, too, and scouts unmatched."

"I am told that the women, then, make the crops which support your allies," suggested Sir Paris.

"Why, no," returned Oglethorpe, "not just so; for the Cherokees, who were most willing to send me a body of fighting men, were so destroyed by rum and smallpox, carried up to them by unprincipled traders, that when I met them but now at Fort Augusta, they declared that if they stayed not at home to till their maize-fields this year, they must surely starve and die next. Yet they were most willing to fight the Spanish with me; so I ordered corn to be purchased to the amount —"

"I will help!" cried Diana, eagerly. "If I cannot wield a sword or fire a musket, I may buy corn to feed those who can."

"Indeed, and so shall," Oglethorpe assured her, heartily. "The rub is ever there. We have so much to do, and such straitened means. I am grown avaricious, I fear, like him who was called 'good fellow' and 'free-hearted companion' in his youth, but being come to years, and suited with a most numerous, helpless, and ever-hungry family, shows as a miser, a niggard, so eager and so careful. When the poor, ragged, dishonoured peace between the nations was at last broke, and our government wrote me to proceed to annoy the Spanish, I bethought me joyfully that at least those monies which had been designed to purchase presents for the Spanish, in case we had made a treaty with them, could now be laid out in powder and shot."

"Which an Englishman could with better heart present to Spaniards," laughed Diana; and General Oglethorpe, smiling, returned to his maps with:

"So, there in Augustine, the Spanish sit and show their teeth at us. Now and again they sally out and drive our cattle away, demolish our houses or fortifications, or incite our own Indians to rebellion; while those Indians whom they have enlisted are ever ready for depredation in their own ghastly fashion. Now, if we can do no more with these fortifications and these warlike demonstrations, we can keep the Spaniards to their own ground, and bid them beware of encroaching upon ours."

"I see, I see," commented Diana, thoughtfully. "It would not do to crouch here in Savannah and let the dons march into our own country. We are too weak for that." She spoke exactly as though she were the general's aide or lieutenant, and he smiled affectionately at her earnest young face.

"You would have made a bonny fighter, young mistress," he said. "And yet, being a man, I cannot regret that you are not one."

The old look of brooding anger came back to her forehead. "Were I a man," she answered him, "I would have one bit of business to transact, and then I'd be for you, general. But the men of my family are all dead," and she glanced rebelliously at Sir Paris, where he traced upon the map, with a long pallid forefinger, the course of a little creek down whose silent, hidden waters few save Indians had ever floated. Brought back once more to the subject of her own griefs, Diana leaned forward and put a hand upon the general's arm.

"Did you ever hear of any maid being so treated — any lady, that is? I have heard of such things being done to common people."

"Why, as to that," Oglethorpe answered, quietly, "I think the heart of one woman will ache in about the same manner that the heart of another woman does; and I have heard of such things as this before, Mistress Diana. Men, in their overblown pride, are oftentimes very cruel to those who are defenceless."

"Aye, 'twas that! 'twas that!" cried Diana, with scarlet cheeks. "I had no defender. Had there been one sword between me and this disgrace —"

"Well, what then, dear girl?" questioned Oglethorpe, gently. "Had there been one sword between you and this thing which happened, it is likely that Archibald Cameron would have kept his plighted word, and that you would now be his wretched wife. Can you not thank God that this thing is not so?"

"I had not thought of that," answered Diana, musingly. Then with sudden energy, "Nay, you are mistaken, sir. I had rather be the wife of a fiend from the pit, than to be put to this public disgrace. I could have slit his throat in his sleep, and so been rid of him."

This speech brought both Diana's relatives to their feet; but the general raised a hand remonstrantly. "Let her say it," he urged. "Let her speak out what thoughts are in her; 'tis better so, believe me."

Hastie wrote upon her tablets, "I feel myself at fault, to put a guest in my house to the pain of hearing this silly girl rave. But if you will listen to her, why, you know best, and I will say no more."

The general bowed low in handing back the tablet,

and turning to Diana took her hand. He was well aware that the opposition and shrinking which she saw in the faces of her kinspeople drove her continually to these violent extremes.

"Now," he said, "my dear lady, daughter of my dead friend, say what you will. I am ready to listen. And, if there is aught to be done, I am ready to do it."

So full and free a permission closed at once the flood-gates of Diana's eloquence. In point of fact, she well knew that he had been given an account of the matter, and she had nothing to say to him. It was only that she was steeped to the lips in the pain, shame, rage, and disgrace of the thing which had been put upon her, and it was difficult for her to hold her mind to the contemplation of any other subject. It was plain that Sir Paris's feeble attempts to stem the tide had accelerated it; Hastie's contemptuous indifference had moved Diana to try if possible to shock her into some expression. But this man's kindly, tolerant, human attitude quite outfaced her.

"No," she said, "let us talk of something that is worth while. Let us discuss once more your plans for Fort St. Simons and the town of Frederica. I have an idea which I fain would set forth to you, of how such a fort as yours — if it lie low enough — could be vastly strengthened for defence by letting of the tide-water into its moat, and setting gates to hold it there. My father used to explain such things to me, (a naval officer gets some experience in those matters,) and I have never forgotten."

There followed a half-hour's earnest talk over the map, Sir Paris now and then putting in a fribbling comment, Hastie once or twice writing a query.

Diana's force, her alert intellect with its masculine bent, showed plainly. At the end of this time, the general pushed the maps aside, and said:

"Enough of this. I have your affairs more at heart really just now, and I came to-day to offer you a house which Mr. Maybank built in Savannah, and which his death and the departure of his widow for England has left vacant. It is a house of too much pretension to be readily rented in so new a colony as ours, and I think it will house you comfortably, if not luxuriously. The garden is one of its chief beauties, and in that I am sure Mistress Diana will take much delight."

"A garden!" commented Diana, briefly. "I have a good gardener with me, an African, and a remarkably skilful man with the plants of this country."

"Oh, a garden!" echoed Sir Paris. "I shall exist in that garden. I delight in odours and colours; 'tis the one thing which makes this desolate land fit to live in — that its flowers bloom the year round."

Oglethorpe cast a swift, numourous glance toward Mistress Wynnewood to observe if she noted this quaint reversal of the interest which the age and sex of these two would have led one to expect.

"You should not be there alone," the general suggested. "It is possible that Mistress Wynnewood might —"

He broke off, for Hastie was writing on her slate with angry rapidity. "I came to America, as you know, ten years ago," she pencilled. "I went into the home of these two. My Cousin Hector was but lately deceased; Diana was ten years old. A most intemperate, unmanageable child it has never been

my lot to see. I resided in that house five years. At the end of that time, Diana was five years older and five-fold worse. I have, as you also know, been three years at Wynnewoode Hall. Here I have had peace, and I am not going back into war."

With a look too grim for a smile, and which yet held some amusement, Diana watched her cousin write, and observed the general reading. She would have been as little willing to accept Hastie for a member of her household as that lady would have been to occupy the position.

"My dear child," urged the general, "there must be some woman with you. You will be very lonely."

"I have my negresses," returned Diana, "and occupation in the management of my household. Were I a man, I should have enough to divert me outside. As it is, I must find entertainment within doors; and I shall do so."

The general looked helplessly at Hastie as he handed her tablets back. He so plainly desired to remonstrate with her, that she turned them and wrote upon the other side. "No, no, it would never do. I could never abide the girl then; now, stewed as she is in her own woes, full of bitterness and complaint, it would not take more than one day to bring about an explosion which would destroy such good feeling between us as we are both now anxious to preserve."

"There is a young woman," the general suggested, finally, "who acted as housekeeper to Mistress Maybank, and teacher of her children. She is a superior person, I should think; a Scotchwoman, of Glasgow, I believe; and it is possible that she

might remain with those who take the house. She is now in charge of it."

"I would keep her," returned Diana, indifferently, "if 'tis your mind that it would look better to do so; but she must understand that in my own house my word is paramount. I will not have such a housekeeper as I have seen, who ruled the entire establishment and the mistress as well."

"It would certainly be much more *politely*," quavered Sir Paris. "I have ever thought that the thing which happened would not have happened if some woman of mature years had been in the house to counsel you, Diana, upon such matters."

"The thing which happened would not have happened," quoted Diana, mimicking his speech, "if I had had an uncle who was known to be a man to reckon with. Do you think, sir, that I am going to hire a woman to advise me in my love-affairs?"

"You would be wise to do so," wrote Hastie, and held the slate grimly toward her.

So apt was the check, that Diana was halted for an instant; and the three of them had time to observe how unseemly was this family wrangle in the presence of a guest.

"I entreat your pardon, General Oglethorpe, and I will ask you to arrange with this lady — you said she was a lady, did you not? — to remain with me. If later I do not like her, she may go, and I shall be not unwilling to pay her for that time and trouble which she wastes upon me. So much for my affairs. And now, of yours, which are those of all the country. I beg that, when I have this home of my own in Savannah, you give me to do something for your expedition against Augustine. A woman cannot

lead a company, but pray suffer me to outfit one from my own means. Or, if your officers find difficulty in getting temporary places for to remain in, you may quarter any of those who may not come from Charles Town in my house, and I will see that they are well entreated while under its roof."

"Your offer is most welcome," returned the general, "and most gratefully accepted." The orderly from the guard-boat here arrived to say that the tide was full and the captain must be making sail shortly. Oglethorpe, as he bade her farewell, said, smilingly, "I shall have you as ardently interested in the matter as myself before long."

Leaving Sir Paris and Diana in the drawing-room, Hastie followed the general to the outer door, and detained him a moment to give him one little message more upon her tablets.

"You are a wonderful man," it read. "I have never seen Diana Chaters, in speaking to any one, appear so well nor utter so much sense as she has in the last hour, talking to you; and she began in a most monstrous silly frame of mind."

The general read these lines with a deprecating glance and half-pained smile, saying, "I observed, after I had been talking with the young lady a very few minutes, that it was difficult for her mind to take account of aught save the humiliation to which she had been put."

"She is a most perfectly selfish person," pencilled Hastie; "and her own concerns ever blot out to her eye the concerns of the universe."

"Are you not too severe?" inquired the general. "It was but natural, methinks, that it should be so with her. When you snatch an orange from a child,

'tis, to that infant intelligence, as though you plucked the sun from the heaven, and its sky is dark with anger and despair. For me, I have but introduced to this ailing mind a subject upon which I display perhaps as foolish a fondness. I am, like the poor child herself, so full of my own affair that I can talk sensibly upon no other. This, mind you, was her war, — a war in which she had been most cruelly worsted and made to drink, clean to the lees, the bitter cup of vanquishment. The first blow struck a petted, spoiled child, seems to it an outrage for which the whole universe should be answerable; and I think, considering these things, the unhappy young maid has done quite well. I pray you to confess, now, that had she not much force and nobility she would have flung my expedition and my garrisons, my base of supplies, feigned attacks, advances in echelon, and all my paraphernalia of war, at my head, to speak figuratively, and returned incontinent to her griefs."

Hastie merely shifted her tablet so that the first sentence she had written, "You are a wonderful man," was exposed once more, drew a dash under it, and smilingly led the way toward the avenue which conducted downward to the landing.

CHAPTER VIII.

FROM FAR COUNTRIES

"O PITY on me! O pity!" said she,
'That my love was so lightly won!
To leave my poor father and follow thee,
So far from Glasgow town.'"

GENERAL OGLETHORPE, as representative of the Trust in the Province of Georgia, had many strange negotiations thrust upon him, and numerous curious decisions to make. The Indians, and his humble trust-servants and beneficiaries, alluded to him as the father of the colony; and many domestic broils and neighbourhood disagreements found soothing at his hands.

The lack of wives for those single men who were in a position to take care of a wife was ever pressing; and he frequently voiced this need to the trustees and others. Where there was any marriageable woman within his immediate circle, he was always applied to for her by a dozen or more postulant husbands; so that, though Lit Buckaloo and her father belonged in no sense to the colony, it is not strange that Francis Bennerworth should have thought it worth while to enlist the general's good offices in his favour.

"Her father is the proper man for you to speak to," the general deprecated.

"But he is away at Yamacraw," Bennerworth objected, "and she will not see me nor listen to me; and I fear — She has so many other suitors. Pray, General Oglethorpe, do you tell her at least of any good thing you can in my favour, and that I would amend me of my faults for her sake, and make a most proper husband."

"Why, as to that," the general responded, kindly, "the most suitable arrangement will be for you to come here, and let me send for the maid, and talk it over."

This arrangement resulted in Lit's going with the general the next morning to the pretty green place called the Public Gardens, where, as he informed her, there was one who wished a few moments' private speech with her.

"'Tis Frank Bennerworth," she said, drawing back, a little pale, and most unwilling.

"Why, yes," the general agreed, "it seems you know what he would be saying."

"'Tis no use, General Oglethorpe," the girl objected. "Nay, after all, I will not turn back. I will hear him — once."

Lit, remember, was half Indian, and totally uneducated. It is small wonder that this match seemed to the general an excellent one for her, since Bennerworth was a man of birth, well educated, and very pleasing, a bright fellow when he chose to be, and one that could easily make his way in this new land. Something of this the general said to her, as they walked together toward the gate leading to the Gardens.

On their way they passed a young fellow in uniform who gave the general a military salute. Lit recognised in him the hero of the miniature episode, and made some inquiry of the general concerning him.

"'Tis Lieutenant Robert Marshall, new come from Virginia to assist this colony in the war which was declared a month ago. I have the less need for your father's services — which were denied me, on account of his private affairs — because this young man chances to understand Creek very well indeed, and I am leaving him here to treat with the reënforcement as they come down."

"I think you know," Lit began, after a slight hesitation, "that I would always be ready to make myself useful as interpreter. My Indian blood," she added, bitterly, "might be made to serve a good turn there, if nowhere else. But a maid, General Oglethorpe, must go where her father tells her."

"Aye," the general agreed, "but this arrangement which I now desire you to consider, would keep you here in Savannah, or at hand, where you might be indeed most useful to the king's arms."

"The trouble is," Lit returned, frankly, "that I know what like a drunken man may be."

"O, as to the drinking," Oglethorpe returned, gravely, "that is a serious matter, my child, and one in which you do well to be particular. But this young fellow promises that all shall be changed, and I have ever found him a man of his word."

"To you!" burst out Lit, half-angry, half-laughing. "Aye, a man will find a way to keep his word to a man. There's honour in it, d'ye see?"

But his vows to a woman flow as easily as the breath it takes to make 'em — and are worth as much."

The general here opened the gate for her, saw her through, and that Bennerworth rose from a bench where he had been sitting and hurried forward to greet her. Then he turned and went down the street to the house of Colonel Maybank, to arrange for its being let to Diana.

The social codes for ladies, and for simple maids like Lit Buckaloo, differed considerably, and she might have her interview with her lover without chaperonage. The general glanced back once, and observed that the man had caught the girl's hand and was speaking eagerly.

"The poor maid is ill placed with her father," he said to himself, — "a man whose loyalty, even, I have mistrusted. It would be well if this young man can persuade her to wed him, and remain here in Savannah amid more civilised surroundings. She is a good child, and might indeed be useful to this settlement in treating with the Indians," and his kindly mind ran on to plannings for the future of the young people, as though that future were already decided.

Back in the Garden, the courtship was speeding ill. "I tell you, Lit," urged Bennerworth, half-pathetically, half-fiercely, "if you do not take me, the devil will."

"Oh, lad, lad," returned Lit, her brown eyes full of trouble, "that is a man all over! Who am I, to keep the devil off you? The way of the thing would be that I should take you, and then he'd foreclose, and the two of us could never own the same man."

"How cold you are!" Bennerworth cried, the tears in his big sensitive eyes. "I never thought to hear you use such words to me, and push me away from you like that."

"God knows," the girl faltered, "this is the only defence I have. I will never marry a man — no, no, no, I never will! — that has the drink devil a-holt of him. Dad is enough for me of that sort."

"Why, Lit! You laughed about your father being so drunk the other night that he could not get home and slept on the doorstep of Ashburnham House."

"O, yes," returned the girl, bitterly, "I laughed. Where was the good of crying? But, mind you, Frank Bennerworth, if I laughed at it, 'twas my soul wept the harder."

"Lit! Lit! I do not know you when you look at me like that, and speak so," her lover said. "Why, all the men hereabout drink. 'Tis the way, living in a rough new country like this. No one thinks aught of it, except to laugh about it, as you did. Why, sweetheart, I helped Sir Paris home the other night from supping with Major Bailie, and 'twas a mercy I was sober myself, for the poor gentleman knew as little which foot to put before the other as he did what quarter of the globe his own inn might lie in."

"Well, drink then," choked Lit, fiercely, "and be drunken, and be beasts if you like! But don't come after a poor lass that has had her heart scalded with it, asking her to prop you out of the mud, when you tell her you want to fall into it."

"Didn't I promise," Bennerworth asked, in a

somewhat injured tone, "that I would give up the drink for your sake?"

"Lord! Lord!" commented Lit, sadly, "if a clerk would write on fair white paper all the promises men have made to women that they would give up the drink when once they were wed, methinks 'twould belt the earth. And a mourning band 'twould be. I tell ye, Frank, ye know naught of my father. You see him drink here among his mates. Down at the horse place on Cumberland, or the plantation on the St. Mary's, he hath savage times when he is both drunk and mad, and God knows which the most. 'Tis not alone that I am afraid for my life — afraid for it, did I say? I have wished many a time he would kill me — but there is the little lad, my brother. Dad loves him as the apple of his eye. He would cut himself — or me either — in mince-meat to pleasure him; and yet Salequah's life has been in danger, too. And when I told Dad of it — when he was sober and came to his senses — he wept like a bairn, and called God to witness that he would never drink again. Think you I have not heard such vows as those you wish to make to me? Nay, have an end of it; I'll hear no more. My heart is too soft."

"Yes," agreed Bennerworth, miserably, "'tis that I fear, Lit. You won't wed me; but in a year or two I'll see you wedding some other fellow, and that I cannot bear."

"A year or two?" laughed Lit. "Why for should I wait a year or two? You may lay every penny that you did not spend for drink last night, that I'll marry the best man I can find when I get ready. What manner of use would it be having all the lads

tagging after me, if I did not take some one of them?"

"And then what's to become of me?" queried Bennerworth.

Lit turned and loo'ed at him darkly; then something in the shamed, humbled figure before her broke down the barrier of her resentment.

"Oh! Frank," she cried, bursting into tears, "we be just two poor miserable beings; and I do love you, so there! Hear it, lad, and take what comfort you may from it; for I'll marry no man that drinks, and that's just one kind of misery I'll not be dragged through."

Meantime General Oglethorpe walked down St. Julian Street to where a three-story house, its basement of Savannah brick, abutted directly on the sidewalk. Tall gray flanking walls of tappy gave privacy to the garden and dignity to the façade. The doorway showed some architectural pretensions. The size of this house was, for the time and place, imposing, and back of it there sloped down to the creek an extensive garden, around which the tappy wall was carried in the English fashion.

Within this garden the former owner had attempted to gather all of the more striking and beautiful plants and shrubs native to the country, and to them added, as occasion offered, rare plants brought from the West Indies by the trading sloops, or the gifts of some sea-captain from a further port, which latter needs must come in the way of seeds or dried roots. A tangle of vines hid most of the rough grayish-white wall surface. Palmettoes were grouped in the corners, with tall sago palms above them.

The spot selected had contained already a few dozen trees, great live oaks, magnolias, and the smaller shrub-like growth of the candleberry myrtle. Altogether it was a gorgeous garden; its thin scanty soil reinforced by rich mould from the river bank, carried in rush baskets upon the heads of negroes or Indians, bore a fair showing of grass; while its white shell walks wound among beds of blossoms, with seats and arbours scattered about here and there.

The woman in charge of the house, that Agnes of whom the general had spoken to Diana, assured him that no one had yet taken the place, and told him that she herself would be willing to remain with the family which did so. She was a spare, undersized, timid-looking creature, with a pair of wonderful eyes and a nervous fluttering use of her small hands, evidently a woman of education, living now much beneath the station in life to which she was born.

"I must tell you of the family with whom you will live if you make this arrangement," said the general, kindly. "Will you not sit, Mistress Mac-Bain?" But Agnes preferred to stand, leaning upon the back of a chair and listening while the general described her new employers.

"There is an old gentleman," he began, then added, apologetically, "though not so old, neither. I am sure that I should not so miscall him since he is but little my senior. Well, then, there is a gentleman of about six and fifty, Sir Paris Chaters, something of an invalid, most gentle-tempered, and interested in antiquarian pursuits. There is his niece, Mistress Diana Chaters, a very handsome,

imperious young person, who is the monied man of the family, having inherited a handsome fortune from her mother. She is at present suffering great distress of mind; in fact, she came to Savannah to escape from a most trying coil. Archibald Cameron, a Scotchman, came less than two months ago to Charles Town — ”

Agnes had been standing with her side face to the general, her head respectfully bent. Now she clutched the chair-back as though to save herself from falling, and turned to him such startled eyes as he afterwards remembered. “What name is that you would be saying?” she asked. “Pardon me, is it a Scotchman?”

“Archibald Cameron?” inquired the general. “Yes, a young Scotchman, only in this country for a year. Is he known to you?”

“The name is familiar,” returned Agnes, finally. “I am — I have been — you know, searching for a brother; and I notice the name of any Scotch person who — who might afford me information.”

Passively accepting this explanation, the general continued. “Well, then, this Archibald Cameron, who, by the best account which can be made of him, is a very great scoundrel, within two weeks of their first meeting cozened this poor child into a promise of marriage.”

Agnes MacBain drew a long, shuddering breath, and the sight of her groping fingers on the chair-back caused the general to rise and place a seat for her, assisting her to it and saying, kindly, “You are not well this morning, Mistress MacBain?”

“I — I — ” gasped the woman, faintly. “And

what then, sir? Were they wed? Is it to them you are supposing I will be servant?"

"No. When she went to the church, poor girl, this fiend in man's form sent her word that she might wed whom she pleased, since she was so bent on wedding; for his own part, he had changed his mind, and would none of her."

There was silence for so long that it seemed the Scotchwoman would make no comment. Finally she said, without looking at her listener, "It is a distressing story. The man was a countryman of mine. I — what did the lady do then, sir? Did she follow and speak with him — with Major Cameron?"

"Follow and speak with him!" echoed the general, with some asperity. "If Sir Paris were not an invalid, and in any case a man who hath ever avoided a quarrel, he would have followed and spoken to the young man to some purpose. Nay, Mistress MacBain, the lady, Diana Chaters, is a woman of spirit, but the humiliation was more than she could support. She gathered her household and came down the coast in the Company's sloop, *Good Report*, and I tell you this sad story, which is unknown here in Savannah, because you will be closely associated with her; and as you may imagine, her temper is still disturbed by these happenings, so that you must bear with it, if you would be one of her household, as you would bear with a sick, peevish child. Do you wish to do so? Would you rather seek another situation? Or do you prefer to prosecute that search for your brother which brought you to this country?"

"My brother," repeated Agnes, with an odd ca-

dence in her voice; and then again after a long pause, "My brother. I learn, sir, that my brother — I — my brother is —" she broke off, and looked nervously about the room, finishing in a sort of half-whisper, "my brother is dead."

"This is most sad and unexpected," returned the general. "When got you such news?"

"Quite recently," Agnes faltered. "And yet I do not feel as though the news were recent, for my heart has failed me in this matter for months past, and I should be indeed most glad to remain with this young lady, if I may be of service, or in some measure comfort her who is also in affliction."

"I think your position, aside from the natural imperious bent of the young lady, will be satisfactory to you," the general said. "You will act as house-keeper under her direction, and as companion to her, since she is singularly and painfully alone. I have spoken to her of you, and enlisted her interest. I trust that your association with her will be pleasant and profitable to both. And now, if you will give me a list of the rooms and of such furnishings as Mistress Maybank desires to be left with the dwelling, I think I may be going."

As he took up his hat for departure, the general paused a moment. "Before we decide this matter, Mistress MacBain, there is another offer — or offers, perhaps I should say — which I should present for your consideration." He paused in some embarrassment, then went on, smiling slightly. "That which I would speak of is the natural condition of a married marriage, a home, a husband of her own."

The truth was that General Ogletorpe, as has been said, was besieged and clamoured to by

pioneers who did not choose to wed native women; and out of these there might be three or four whose station and condition in life would fit them for Agnes MacBain's consideration. Like a politic man, he did not put his offer so baldly, but left her with the impression that some friends of his, most worthy gentlemen, having seen her and been attracted by her appearance, were very fain to make her acquaintance with a view to matrimony.

"Husband!" cried Agnes, again that curious croop in her voice: she added in a half-whisper, "a husband for me?"

"Why not, Mistress MacBain?" asked the general, and now he was smiling indeed. "There is nothing strange whatever in the proposition. It is surely not the first time you have had such a idea suggested to you?"

"Nay," said Agnes, "there is no husband for me, I think. I have set my life apart from that of others, to search for — my — brother. And now —" She faltered, took counsel with herself a moment, then resumed, "And now that I find he is dead, I — I — Oh! sir, pray put such ideas out of the heads of any men who would associate them with me. I am not for them, nor they for me."

As the general turned and looked back at the kindly façade of Maybank, which was now to be rechristened Chaters House, he saw Agnes MacBain's gray little face at a window, and his mind returned to her curious reception of his matrimonial proposition.

"I am sure an ill messenger for Cupid or Hymen is perhaps the more apt term; and yet I think I said it not so ill that it should have offended her.

I fear she is one of those persons with a deathless sorrow, which is generally another name for a whimsey that would be better put aside." And he went on down the sunny street toward that quarter where the houses of the Company were built, small square structures, in one of which he was an occasional guest, upon such rare times as he stole from his more important work at Frederica.

After Oglethorpe had passed out of sight, the woman stood long looking out upon the sandy stretch of street. She gazed upon its crudeness and poverty, and thought of the beautiful home upon the Clyde clad in the greenery of ancient trees and turf, in that old Scottish city that gave her birth. From this home she had gone forth to follow the footsteps of Archibald Cameron, hardly herself believing — hardly daring to believe — in the idle protestations of one of his brief, insolent, fiery love-makings (which had fallen sere indeed when he found that old Farfrae MacBain's ships and moneys were not for him, nor for Agnes if she wedded him), half dreading that, if she found him, she might be unwelcome, yet following her false star still, because her whole sky had been made dark, her whole quiet life unbearably empty, by its withdrawal.

She left behind her a heart-broken father — her mother was long since dead — who, since she had been frank as to the object of her voyage, declared that she might starve in the streets of the new world, rather than that a cent of his honestly made money should go to further a folly which seemed to the stern old Covenanter perilously near disgrace.

A few steps from her window, an Indian was conducting by signs a barter with a negro vender

of fish. In this picturesque group, Agnes's narrow, conventional mind took account only of the uncouthness of dress and gesticulation. Oglethorpe's story was the first word of Cameron she had heard. She had come in one of her father's own ships from Glasgow to Charles Town, there being much direct shipping between the two places at that time. There she had lived for more than a year, husbanding her little means, supporting herself as she could, by skilled needlework or by teaching young children. Cameron was at the time in New York and Virginia, but she got no clue of him. And as her inquiries were timidly made, and seemed ever to bring her somewhat of discredit and suspicion, she embraced eagerly the opportunity to go further south into a newer colony, hoping she might there find trace of him she sought. She joined the family of Mr. Maybank, coming through from England to Savannah, just one week before chance brought Archibald Cameron to Charles Town.

Now, as she stood looking out at the two creatures of barbarous race, upon the land so desolately foreign and inhospitable to her eye, she realised faintly the folly of her quest. Say she had remained in Charles Town, and found heart to present herself before the object of her blind passion? Would he have stooped to pick up the heart she flung into the dirt at his feet?

She had now not even the dowry which might once have attracted him. Ah, no — no — no! While he was making a mock and sport of a beautiful creature, rich, her junior by many years, her superior in rank, what could she hope?

CHAPTER IX.

MAIN YOUNG

"A BONNIE lad wi' shoulders broad,
Gold yellow was his hair;
Nane o' our Scottish youths, ava,
That wi' him could compare."

DIANA CHATERS had settled her household in the dwelling on St. Julian Street. Her management of the entire affair, once her decision was made and the practical details were to be gone into, was both admirable and effective. Somewhat to the surprise of her uncle and cousin, she from the first took what they were pleased to call "a fancy" to Agnes MacBain. Her own summing up of the situation was: —

"Agnes is a woman of sense; she does what she is told and does it well, and wastes no words upon it. When I find those with whom I am brought in contact sensible, competent, and obedient to Me, there is no trouble about my giving them a measure of my regard. It is only to those who are foolish, talkative, bent upon idleness or taking undue authority with me, that I seem a fury, and so I judge would any sensible person seem to them in my position."

On the first morning after the installation of her household, when Agnes of Glasgow came to make

her reports and give her young mistress control of the exact state of affairs, Mistress Chaters paused with an account-book under her long, slender, capable fingers, and asked, brusquely, "You have heard the history of why I came to Savannah? You have been told of the doings of that dastardly cur at Charles Town?"

"I have," returned Agnes, in a very low voice.

"I ask because the one woman who is to be near me should know of this matter. I am not ashamed of it. I should be willing that the whole town knew of it — once I have had my revenge."

"'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,'" quoted Agnes, in a smothered whisper.

"What's that?" inquired Diana, sharply. "Scripture? O, I judge you are a Dissenter. They will ever be poking a text into the conversation."

Agnes, who had been bred a Presbyterian, but from whose Calvinism the warning had not proceeded, made no reply to this query, and the talk turned to domestic matters.

So thoroughly competent was Agnes of Glasgow, so much better acquainted with the markets and the manner of living in this new town than Diana, that the mistress soon found it convenient to leave the whole management of household matters in her hands. This would have been well, only that it gave the young girl the more time to brood unhealthily upon her own situation, and to chafe and fret for some outlet for those energies which were so pent and fermenting within her as to keep her in continual distress.

She sat one morning in early December in her garden. Those few plants which were protected

by latticed houses were in bloom, and a warm day being promised, the temperature was something like a northern spring. The book in her lap did not chain her attention. The view which was before her, a reach of silver winding creek and the edge of her own garden wall, failed to satisfy her. When Mistress MacBain came out with the day's accounting and allotment of tasks to the various servants, she listened half-impatiently.

"Very well, Agnes," she said, "never mind telling me about it. I find that you attend to these things quite as well as I could myself; and for the present at least let us call you the mistress of Chaters House."

Agnes smiled a little sadly. "I think it would be wholesome for you, Mistress Chaters, to interest yourself in these matters."

"Oh, wholesome!" echoed Diana. "The question is, would it be interesting? I wish Mr. Buccleugh's daughter were here. I desire to know from her something of the Creek Indians with whom she and her father live."

"Her mother was a Creek, so they tell me," Agnes suggested. "Some say she was old Tomachi-chi's granddaughter."

"I had well-nigh forgot that Lit is half-Indian," mused Diana. "Perhaps that is why she and I get on so well together. There is wild blood enough in the Chaters family to be kin to an Indian chief's great-granddaughter."

"Here comes the young woman now," exclaimed Agnes, withdrawing, as a canoe with a girl paddling it came swiftly up the stream and stopped abreast the little landing at the garden's foot.

Diana retained her seat upon the bench, and Lit, having stepped out and tied her craft, flung herself down on the edge of the platform.

"I have some news for you, fair Mistress Diana," she began. "You told me that the general would make your house a stopping-place for some officers going through to Frederica; well, he will be sending three here this morning."

"Yes?" returned Diana, with the interest Lit always aroused in her. "Agnes has chambers all in readiness for them."

"Then you knew of their coming?" Lit asked. "And you have seen 'em?"

"No, but I understand that two of them are English gentlemen, one the surveyor who is to lay out fortifications for the expedition; and the third one —"

"The third one," Lit interrupted, "is a pretty fellow — oh! the prettiest young fellow you ever saw. 'Tis a Lieutenant Robert Marshall, from the Virginia colony above. The other two be old, and the surveyor-man hath a squint; I take no interest in him; but this young lieutenant, Mistress Diana —"

"Well, what of him?" inquired Diana, rather shortly. "I did not want a young man quartered in my house."

"Why — why —" began Lit, hesitatingly, "I think that there is your mistake. I think you do want a young man here — and a very young one. They're main easy caught when they're as young as this one is," and she looked up at Diana through her long, thick, curling, dark lashes.

"Caught!" echoed Diana, angrily. "In Charles

Town I had my sighing swains by the dozens. I could have married twenty times before I met — before — ” She broke off, and Lit resumed.

“ Well, ’tis a month since thy — thy — at the church, you know; and the tale will follow you to Savannah. What I would say is, marry some man before the story comes to this town, and let him fight thy battles for thee.”

“ Marry,” repeated Diana, musingly. “ ’Tis a thing of which I have often thought since then. And you told me, when first you came to see me, that it was the best story I could send to that hound. But if I married now, and I could see in the man’s face afterward that he had wedded me through pity, that he had heard the story of my humiliation, methinks I could strike him dead for it. And yet, since I cannot wear a sword myself, a husband would indeed answer my purpose.”

“ The lieutenant,” Lit suggested, “ the one I spoke of, you know — he is barely come of age, and he’s not long here from Virginia. You could be sure he had not heard it.”

“ Well?” prompted Diana.

“ Why,” resumed Lit, “ he is young, as I said to you, and tall, and well-favoured — oh, a bonny fathom of a man! He is, as you shall see, a — Well — he’s very young.”

“ And what of that?” Diana questioned again.

“ I tell you they’re main easy caught when they’re so young. You might have him, you might be Mistress Lieutenant in a week for a glint or two of those bonny eyes of yours. They’re main easy managed when they’re so young,” and she laughed like a nymph through her long lashes.

"I'll think of it," Diana answered, and forthwith fell into a brown study.

"Would you mind my slipping off my moccasins and dipping my feet in the water here while I talk?" asked Lit. "I have tramped eight miles to-day, and I long for the feel of the cold water on them."

Diana smiled an indulgent assent, and thereafter looked down at Lit as she sat dabbling those slim, arched brown members in the slow, clear current, and realised very fully the beauty of this wild blossom. Lit's rich hair was bound after the fashion of the Indian women, in two plaits, with many bright-coloured ribbons entwined in it and holding it in place; but, unlike the hair of these aboriginal women, it broke from gay fillet and confining braid in many short threads of curl about her forehead and neck. Her skin was brown as much from exposure to the weather as from native colour, and on the cheek the rich red blushed softly through with an indescribable suggestion of warm, vivid, pulsating life. Her teeth, white and beautiful, were always flashing in smiles, the lips which parted to disclose them dewy red, like a cleft pomegranate. The chief beauty of her face, however, lay in her eyes. Arched above by heavy brows, shaded by a child's thick curling lashes, these were at once passionate and merry, the eyes of a dryad.

"I would that I had tramped the eight miles with you," remarked Diana, suddenly. "I am dead weary of sitting in this house, and walking about this garden—an idle, moped, fine lady. I think I should enjoy going back with you to your people, and living as they do in tents and wigwams."

A deeper red surged up under Lit's brown skin.

"My people are Scotch," she said, sullenly, "and they do not live in tents. My father hath built him a great house of tappy and stone down on the St. Mary's; and there we entertain the larger part of ten tribes of Indians." She began in anger, and ended with a sudden flash of laughter. The Creek mother was an old disgrace; and Diana's allusion to it after all perfectly natural.

"Shall you be going south soon?" asked the lady, with persistent interest. "Your visits are my sole diversion."

"Yes, we go now shortly." Lit replied; "but you will not need my visits after Lieutenant Marshall comes."

"I could marry the fellow," Diana said, speaking almost more to herself than to Lit, "and then, when I had his name, I could send him packing."

"Marry him and send him packing!" Lit echoed, in the same abstracted tone. She was putting on her moccasins now, and appeared to be addressing the shoe she held in her hand. "Turn him from her doors, will she? Yea, when he is a foot shorter, and hath not at the bottom of's face that chin which I observed. Mistress Diana Chaters hath met her match, for once, when it comes to wilfulness."

"What's this you say?" Diana interrupted her. "He is already prejudiced against me?"

"Oh, no!" Lit protested. "He has his word of you from me — is it like that that would put him against you? And then I have a sweetheart — or two or three, for the matter o' that — at the barracks, in the company which he comes in among; 'tis made up from our lads all about on the Sea Islands here; and I've set 'em at him with tales

of you ever since he came. He is well inclined to love you at first sight." She rose, untied and pushed off her canoe, sprang into it, and held it stationary with her paddle.

"Why, thank you for your assistance," cried Diana, laughing. "You thought I needed it, perhaps?"

"I knew you needed nothing," returned Lit, with a sort of fierce shyness. Philandering with a man came natural to her; but paying compliments to one of her own sex was a new rôle. "I knew you needed nothing; and I" — poised exquisitely in her bark canoe, the stream's naiad, she swept Diana with a half-angry, reluctant, adoring glance—"I but told him what my heart's full of!" Then paddled swiftly down the creek, followed by a well-aimed flower which Diana flung after her with a call of thanks.

After the sound of Lit's paddle had died away to a mere lisp, Mistress Diana Chaters was taken with a wonder as to whether or no she was herself as goodly to the eye as this waif of the forest. She had been praised all her life for her beauty; and yet, tear down the structure of powdered hair upon her head, braid it like that, take off the shoes and set her paddling with bare feet in the water — would she look as well? She doubted it, and was piqued at the doubt.

With Diana the desire to test a thing was scarcely allowed to precede the act of testing it. She dropped her book on the shell walk, kilted up her skirts, ran to the creek edge, wet her hands in the water, and pulled her hair down that she might braid it Indian fashion. This done, using the creek for a mirror, she adjusted her garments as nearly as she

might after the fashion of Lit's, pulling the bobbin which loosed the lacing-string of her very tight corselet, so that she could sit and move freely.

The next thought was of her shoes. "My feet are prettier than hers," Diana said to herself, "or would be if I had never worn a shoe — and a high-heeled one at that." These reflections were made while the high-heeled, pointed slippers were coming off, and the silk hose following them. The beauty of the feet thus revealed was beyond question.

"I wonder if I could bear that cold water on them?" was the next thought. "*She* bore it; she liked it; and I have been all my life a silken fool of a fine lady, so that I am too tender for it. We'll see." Dropping to the landing edge, she dipped one shining foot in the water with a little smothered shriek. Holding it there by force of will, she soon grew accustomed to the coldness. "Why, 'tis not so bad," she said, wonderingly. "Dear me, people of fashion know not what they miss. Aha, I am a wild Indian!" and she leaned back, laughing. "Now if there were only some one here to tell me whether I look better than the young squaw did —"

As though she had evoked the audience she desired, again there whispered a paddle in the creek behind her. She drew back with a shiver of apprehension into the little bower of palmetto which screened the landing-place, thinking, "When they go past, I can get clear of this absurd position."

But the boat did not pass on. Instead, it grounded at the landing, and Diana, whose back was to it, who dared not turn, and scarce dared breathe, felt the jar of some one springing out upon the planks, and heard a musical voice say: "Keep

the boat here, Opelika; I shall be gone but a few moments."

And then a young man in uniform rounded the clump of palmettoes and Diana was discovered.

How long the two paused staring at each other it would be hard to say; but both at the same instant finally burst out laughing. "I am seeking Mistress Diana Chaters," explained the intruder. "I met Sir Paris in the town, and General Oglethorpe hath sent me here to advise her that he will this day quarter three of his officers in her house if she consents."

"And you have found Mistress Chaters," Diana returned, "in a most undignified position, sir." With the words she suddenly remembered her bare feet, and drew them back under the hem of her petticoat. "I was very moped with polite society just now, and I was trying how 'twould be to go back to savagery."

"O, I see," returned the young man, noting the dressing of her hair, "you were playing Indian. May I help you back to the civilised world, which I am certain misses you sadly?" and he extended a hand.

Diana eyed it an instant, and to his amazement shook her head.

"I beg your pardon, sir," she said, lifting to his a very flushed countenance, "would you mind walking on toward the house and — and interesting yourself in it while I reduce my costume to a more genteel footing?"

At the word "footing," which she admitted to herself afterward was a most unfortunate one, the young man's glance dropped to the red-heeled slip-

pers and the hose lying upon the bank, and his embarrassment gave way to mirth.

"I will relieve you of my presence for the time," he said, with alacrity (she was sure he desired to turn his face away that he might laugh), "and I trust that you will join me."

Diana looked after him as he went toward the house. She found him to be rather over than under six feet, but so broad of shoulder that his great height was not unduly apparent. He had a pinky fair complexion, like that of a young girl, which the sun burned red instead of brown; blue eyes, singularly direct in their regard, and of limpid clearness; a short, arched, upper lip, which gave an expression of almost infantile sweetness to the countenance, and yet was capable of a very haughty, wilful curve.

Lieutenant Marshall's complexion, his silky, fair curls, the size and mildness of his blue eyes, were things which pleased him not at all — however much they might take the fancy of some young girl. But the thing that was an unmitigated affliction (or things, rather, for this torment went in couples) was a pair of very deep dimples which the least approach to a smile set playing hide-and-seek in his pink cheeks.

The complexion he bore with such fortitude as Heaven sent, sustained by the hope of what a southern sun might do for it. The hair he covered with an uncompromising tie-wig. As for the eyes, he contented himself by frowning darkly in his mirror, and believing that those who found them other than sternly masculine were mistaken. But the dimples, the wretched dimples, which had earned him the

nickname of Babe Marshall at school, for the which he had fought many a fight, gotten — and given — many a black eye, the dimples were not to be sunburned away, nor hid in a wig, and the very setting of his lips, with which he frowned infantile softness far from his eyes, put these unseemly toys to dancing in his cheeks.

He had been unkindly presented by a brother-in-arms, to Captain Quillian, as "Lieutenant Baby Marshall." The old artillery captain, after once seeing him angry on the voyage down from James Town, had commented:

"By the Lord Harry! Marshall, if your enemies call you baby, they will find you a very cross one, and a cross baby I am ready to swear, as a family man — one who has struggled through the midnight surprises, feints, repulses, ambuscados, and charges-home of six of 'em — a cross baby is a most unpleasant person to deal with."

Now the young officer found himself with ample leisure to examine the great vine of *rosa florabunda* which wreathed and garlanded the main entrance of the mansion, before a slightly breathless voice behind his shoulder remarked:

"This is Lieutenant Marshall, I think? I was so put about by my appearance when you discovered me down there that I failed to inquire."

He turned to see Diana, her slippers replaced, but the great braids of brown hair hanging down her back like a schoolgirl's, and the stiff formality of her costume considerably ameliorated by them. The picture of her sitting there with her feet in the water, and later the glimpse he had had of her running up the walk, and tossing back a rebellious

braid that chose to fall in front of her shoulder, never left him during their after acquaintance. Fate or Chance had chosen that he should meet her as none other had ever done, quite off her guard, unbent. That she seemed always to him afterward a child, must have been part of this. Now, he was surprised to find her so tall, and that she was actually a full-grown young lady; not, as he had at first supposed, a beautiful hoiden of fifteen or thereabout.

"I was so bedazzled by the picture you had prepared for my reception," he said, bowing formally, "that I forgot to present my credentials," and he handed her the general's note.

Diana laughed and blushed at thought of the picture she must have offered, and it was to two very pleased-looking young people that Mistress Agnes MacBain opened the door.

Diana herself showed her guest to the rooms which had been prepared, instead of sending, as she would ordinarily have done, a servant to attend him, or at best deputing it to her housekeeper. After a glance in the chimney-glass, she also put by Agnes's suggestion that she might be excused to make some change in her costume. She had stopped a moment before entering the house, to pick a cluster of late roses. One of them now nestled above her ear, and the other adorned the lapel of the young lieutenant's coat. Agnes smiled bitterly as they passed her upon the stairway, laughing and in full play of the compliment and disclaimer of that age.

"Ah, Archie, Archie! 'Tis not every heart you have wounded that remains faithful as did mine."

And after the young man was gone, Diana, alone

in her room — no longer the bored, indifferent Diana of the morning — reviewed the suggestions to which Lit had reverted, and which had, indeed, been lying in her mind ready to bear fruit since they were first made on the evening of that terrible day in Charles Town.

For no reason which she could have assigned, Lit had abstained from telling Diana that the young lieutenant to be quartered in Chaters House was the owner and original of the miniature which had taken the lady's fancy upon an earlier occasion. So now Diana was left to transfer that fleeting suggestion of remembrance, that sensation of having known the newcomer in some previous incarnation, to Marshall himself. To be sure, he was an image most fit and proper to occupy a young maid's dreams; but in this case there was added to his natural attractions this haunting memory, the flying fringes of which she vainly strove to grasp, and which kept her recalling his every glance and attitude till she fell asleep.

She brought back before the eye of her recollection the face of the young lieutenant, — a not unpleasing task, and one very natural for a young spinster after meeting Robert Marshall for the first time. Was he not the man to her purpose? She thought so. Despite his six feet and his military bearing, there was a joyous and childlike abandon in his manner, an eager credulousness in the big blue eyes, which made her feel his elder, and conceive the possibility of dominating him.

He was plainly of family and breeding, personally presentable as well — though on this latter point she professed to be self a great indifference;

then at once sharply reminded herself that if he were not all these things, a fit and proper match in every way for Mistress Diana Chaters of Chaters House, people were like to say that she took him up for spleen. Nay, after all, she was glad of all his good looks and pleasing ways. They would be useful to her in the future.

CHAPTER X.

THE LIMING OF TWIGS

"THE god of love sat on a tree
And laughed that pleasant sight to see."

THE evening of the same day brought Master Paul Kilsyth, the surveyor (called by courtesy Lieutenant Kilsyth), and Captain Paynter Quillian, an English officer of much dignity and middle age, with their servants and luggage.

Master Matthew Zubley, Diana's steward, who had closed up such of her affairs as he could in Charles Town, had come down by the same brig which brought the captain, and which had but touched at Charles Town. Diana gave a passing thought to the possibility that her steward had informed the gentlemen of her own affairs: but just at present her efforts to please young Marshall rendered her uncommonly gracious to all about her, and this graciousness of manner could not but react upon her spirit itself, and induce in her a greater amiability than was usual.

She had planned to open her campaign with the young lieutenant that evening after dinner, when the stars were out and the garden a very proper place for such use. There, indeed, the gentlemen repaired to smoke in its arbours. But she was detained by

Master Zublev, who was anxious to urge upon her the laying out of an indigo plantation to the southward of Savannah, believing it to be advantageous. Her genius for practical management led her to hold all such matters in her own hands, and a very lively interest in this one detained her until, as she was going out of the doorway after her talk in the office, she met the gentlemen coming in.

"I am disappointed," she said, pouting. "I, too, love to see the stars, if I cannot burn tobacco in their worship."

"Allow me," responded young Marshall, eagerly. "May I call Mistress MacBain, and will you so far honour me as to take a stroll down to the willows?"

The commonplace mention of a chaperone caused Diana to bite her lip; yet it was maids who were well chaperoned that men ever chose to wed, and she agreed sweetly.

The walk to the willows ended in the three sitting down upon the bench where Diana had sat earlier in the day, and her relating to Mistress MacBain with much laughter and exaggeration the history of her morning's encounter.

"I protest that I have forfeited for ever all good opinion of this Virginian gentleman," she concluded. "He will think me nothing but a hoiden to the end of the chapter."

"That would be indeed impossible," Marshall replied. "Your new acquaintances are only in danger of thinking too much and too well of you for your own pleasure, Mistress Chaters."

"A hoiden is not so bad a thing," Agnes commented. "Most of the good-hearted women I have known were a bit hoidenish in their youth."

"Then I am to be known as good-hearted, am I?"

"Can any doubt it when they look upon you?" interposed the lieutenant. And Agnes smiled, a little sadly, in the dark.

Marshall's good opinion of his hostess waxed and grew. Fate seemed in a conspiracy that he should see nothing but the best side of this vigorous, various, unweeded nature.

Chunkey, the scullery-maid, was a mestizo, with all the faults of both negro father and Indian mother — with the virtues of neither race. The small sullen creature had the secretiveness and unresponsiveness of the Indian, without the Indian's dignity, resolution, and force; the negro's inconsequence, but none of his light-heartedness. So incorrigible a servitor would not have remained in the household, except that Diana had come to know and pity the absolute forlornness of her position.

"She is so grotesquely hideous," complained Sir Paris. "Why will you retain in your employ a creature who mars the decorations of a room by entering it?"

"For that reason," returned Diana, shortly. "If I let the poor wretch go, who in the world will interest themselves to give her food? — for earn it she will not."

It seems that Chunkey, seeing the dessert placed for a dinner, had stolen a plate of it; and Juno on the next morning was come, first to Agnes, and then to Diana, demanding that she be whipped for the theft. Marshall, in his room overlooking the garden, heard and saw the court of inquiry conducted below.

"Chunkey," said her mistress to the offender, "why did you take the fruit?"

"I's hongry," returned the girl, gazing indifferently about her.

"But you have all the fruit that you care for to eat," Diana went on, patiently; "and you broke the plate and hid it, so that none should know of your fault. Do you not remember that thieves are whipped?"

"Yas, mistis," developing a vein of philosophy. "I gotty de fruit las' night, an' now you whippy me dis mo'nin'; dass all right."

"But I do not wish to whip you," Diana urged. "I want you to be a good servant and not steal from me; then you shall never be whipped."

"Dass all right," reiterated Chunkey. "I not steal yo' b'longin's; I des steal hers," and she pointed to Juno.

"No, no, that will not answer!" Diana cried. "I do not want you to steal anybody's things. I do not want you to be a thief."

"Den you givvy me t'ings," the handmaiden returned, hopefully, "an' I not wanty steal 'em."

"There, there, Juno," said Diana, "the poor creature is right. If she had plenty to eat she certainly would not steal. You have not been feeding her sufficient, I warrant." And as Juno led her charge away, Diana turned to Agnes, who had been standing beside her, saying, "Is it not so, Agnes? None of us would ever be wicked if we were but given what we want at once. Ah, poor humanity!"

Diana's servants, in spite of her high temper, had been well treated. Their material wants had been looked after, and an occasional kind word or com-

mendation from so high and haughty a source served to make them wholly devoted to her. Now, in these halcyon days, their devotion became demonstrative. Agnes had had from her new employer little but kindness and consideration. Old Pompey, the negro butler, adored even her haughtiness. Sir Paris himself was best pleased to leave undisturbed a state of affairs which gave him peace. Even Chaka, the Indian coachman, felt the sunny effect of the atmosphere in the Chaters mansion, so that it was not strange Lieutenant Marshall found his hostess a marvel of sweetness as well as beauty.

As for Diana, her further acquaintance with the young man revealed to her day by day his unfitness for the rôle she had assigned him. Lad though he was, simply as he showed his admiration for her, she found it always difficult to brave or constrain him. In that laughing boyish fashion of his, he was fond of his own way. Hot-tempered, too, she guessed, although she saw nothing of it. An only child, most tenderly brought up by a doting father, even a soldier's education and a military life had brought few reverses to one who had ever found it easy to please those about him, and win regard and approval by his personal charm. When at times, in the lines of his smooth, fresh-coloured young features, she read some measure of her own dominating and imperious will, her heart misgave her; yet, true daughter of an adventurous line, the more difficult her undertaking, the greater her eagerness in its prosecution.

Life then, at Chaters House settled down to an idyllic calm. All day long the three guests were busily engaged on such preparations for the St.

Augustine expedition as General Oglethorpe had been able to leave in their hands. Kilsyth was soon to go to the front in his capacity of engineer. Lieutenant Marshall, on account of his familiarity with Indian tongues and Indian character, was concerned more with the preparations for provisioning the trains of Indian allies destined for Fort St. Simons and the expedition against Augustine. Captain Quillian was expected to see to the packing and placing of ammunition and the axes, spades, bills, and other implements necessary for pioneer work.

But in the evenings, when the three were returned to this house which had become as a home to them, it seemed that all wars and rumours of wars were very far indeed from its peaceful parlours. The windows would be open, in that pleasant Southern land which has no winter, late roses looking in about the casement edges; in the splendid old silver sconces, pale green fragrant waxen tapers of the candleberry myrtle were set alight, filling the rooms with starry radiance.

Around the table would be, perchance, the three older men playing loo, in which they had vainly entreated the two younger people to join, claiming that less than five made a poor game. But these two, who were already engaged in a game much more ancient than loo, in which Cupid himself is pam, would be drawn apart in the embrasure of a window, deep in low-toned conversation; while Agnes of Glasgow, with her pale face and her black dress like a widow's, sat playing propriety, seeing that refreshments of posset and negus were offered the card-players from time to time; and, when

appealed to by Diana or Robert, mingling in their conversation with rare good sense.

From the card-table came now and then the triumphant cry of Captain Quillian, "The miss is mine — the miss is mine! Aha! the jade brings me a fortune this time!" or Sir Paris's plaintive, "Pam, be civil," as he appealed to an unknown partner to help him with a hand which should have looted the board.

Sir Paris Chaters was neither fool nor ninny. His performance was always vastly better than his appearance and manner would have led one to expect. The first catastrophe in Diana's affairs had taken him rather unaware. Belittled, kept in an inferior place by the imperious temper of his young relative and ward, he had not presumed to offer advice till affairs were past advice-giving, and come to that point when any mention of them on his part became recrimination.

Now, when matters between Robert Marshall and Diana daily assumed a more serious appearance, Sir Paris's behaviour was that of any sensible and prudent, if rather timid, guardian. His first step was to consult General Oglethorpe, in an apparently incidental fashion. The general, being much pressed with his preparations for embarking to go to Darien and Simons, had been but once to Chaters House since the officers were sent there. Sir Paris, however, went to Oglethorpe's headquarters — he was staying in the house of Mr. Habersham — and after some little preamble brought the conversation to the subject he desired.

"We find our guests most pleasing gentlemen," he announced. "Captain Quillian is acquainted with

several persons whom I already know ; Kilsyth is a very worthy man ; and the young lieutenant appears to get on with my niece famously. He is, by the way, the first American-born man whom I have known intimately. Is the family an English one ? Marshall ? Marshall ? I do not appear to recollect it."

"The family is descended," Oglethorpe assured him, "from a Sir Percy Marshall, who lost his title and estates by siding with the wrong party, and came out to Virginia some hundred years ago to better his fortunes. He bettered them with a vengeance, for he prospered, created a noble estate, and founded a family ; and the Marshalls of Virginia have something the standing which we accord to our fine county families at home. As for the young man, he is a worthy shoot upon the ancestral stock. I am as fond of him as of a son, and have never seen aught but good in him. Otherwise I had hesitated to send so young a man as guest in your house, Sir Paris. I trust you find him, also, an agreeable inmate."

"O, as to that," Sir Paris said, "when Mistress Diana is pleased to be pleased we must all smile, at Chaters House."

"The young lady's judgment is good," returned Oglethorpe, "good in this instance at least, and you may be willing to be pleased when she is suited."

"And the estates, you say ?" inquired Sir Paris, once more. It was the day when finance cut more figure in the matrimonial bargain than in our own, although some lovers of the good old times would have us believe to the contrary.

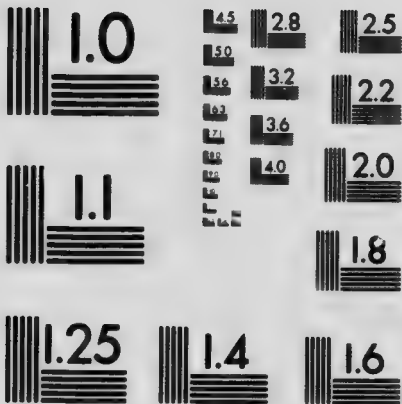
"The young man has means," General Oglethorpe returned. "He is an orphan, like your niece, he must be two and twenty, now, and his estate in his own hands; a very pretty fortune, too, it should be."

Sir Paris's next movement was to make timid overtures to Robert himself. Widely read, a lover of the best in art and literature, his frivolous manner overlaid much which might have pleased the young man had he been less preoccupied with Diana. And yet Robert Marshall, for all that youthful ebullition of high spirits which gave him his laughing, boyish manner, was of so sound a heart and so thoroughly a gentleman, that his respect for Sir Paris, and his attitude of deference toward him, was monstrously soothing and pleasing to the gentle old fellow. The two, having similar tastes in certain directions, fell into the habit of sitting for a moment's chat together whenever some household matter called Diana away. At these times Robert was very fain to speak to the uncle of his niece's perfections.

"I never met a young lady of her age," he declared, "with so much majesty, so much capability, and yet with such childlike openness of nature."

The expression with which Sir Paris accepted these statements was worth study. "Why, yes," he agreed, finally, seeing that something was expected of him, "my niece is rather a majestic young person. 'Tis a heritage which is said to run in the Chaters family, but out of which I have somehow missed my legacy," and he laughed and pushed the tobacco down into his pipe — the two were smoking together.





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"I wonder that you never married, Sir Paris," began Robert, in one of these desultory conversations; "a man with the domestic virtues in perfection, as you possess them, should, it seems to me, have had his own fireside. And yet," he caught himself back to add, "with such a charge as your niece, with such an one for to make your household delightful, I do not wonder that no other woman attracted your eye."

"Hm — ah — yes," returned Sir Paris, somewhat dryly, "probably, my lad, we old fellows have had our romances, when we have not had our wives. I suppose Jamie Oglethorpe, if he ever talks to you of it, will tell you how the two of us, my brother Ulysses and myself, courted our cousin Hastie Wynnewoode some twenty years ago. And now Ulysses is gone, and still I am no nearer pleasing Hastie than I was."

Robert had met the Silent Lady, and a little wonder moved him at the thought of coupling this bold, strong, salient personality with such soft thoughts as those of love and courtship.

"I have written," continued Sir Paris, gently, "some hundred and ten sonnets to the lady. Perhaps," he added, smiling whimsically, "'twas thus I lost her. But I had a very pretty taste for poesy in my youth, and used the sonnet form to beat Will Shakespeare; for I used the Italianate, while he, who was all for making things easy for himself, must needs invent one which is no sonnet at all, but a trio of quatrains tied with a couplet. It — if you should ever be in love, and desire a skilled accomplice, why come to me, and I will show you

some of these sonnets. At her age, Hastie was very much what Diana is."

This latter assertion Robert most earnestly disbelieved. Yet it was only the next morning that, flushing a little and laughing a bit shamefacedly, he said to the old gentleman, "I cannot claim to be in love, Sir Paris, and yet if you would let me see the—you know—the sonnets of which you spoke—I am trying to make a posy to put in a small Christmas gift for a lady, and I thought it might help me to some rhymes."

Sir Paris sighed as he gave the thin parchment-leaved, leather-bound little volume into the young lieutenant's hands. "I very much fear," he said, "that I do ill to set you on in this matter. I myself have gotten nothing out of it but a very sore heart."

Young Marshall flashed a quick glance of astonishment at him. That any one should suppose for an instant a sore heart could be gotten by loving Diana Chaters! It was too monstrous. And the person who suggested such a thing was her own uncle, who must certainly know the manifold perfections of this paragon.

"May I take it to my chamber with me?" he asked, diffidently. "'Tis monstrous hard for me to turn a rhyme at all, and I would fain go there and tear my hair over it."

"After all," mused Sir Paris, as he heard the young man's light foot mounting the stairway two steps at a time, "after all, the wisdom of the old is a sort of mental indigestion. We know what dishes have disagreed with us; and we are ever fain to keep the young from eating their fill of them.

We forget — we forget,” shaking his head, “that a youth more robust than our own may digest these things and thrive by them. But the poor boy; he hath many a lesson to learn beside the simple one of making ‘love’ and ‘dove’ and ‘bliss’ and ‘kiss’ to pair off together in a posy. Methinks he is in a fair way now to come through ‘brief’ and ‘grief,’ ‘vain’ and ‘pain,’ ‘loss’ and ‘cross,’ through ‘years’ and ‘tears’ — aye, and ‘fears’ as well — and so on down to ‘age’ and ‘sage.’”

He dreaded long and flinched from the duty which he conceived was laid upon him of approaching Diana; and when at last the time came that he should speak, matters had gone so far that it was well-nigh superfluous. They were coming home from a dining. Captain Quillian and Marshall had been bidden to it, but military duty kept both away.

“We miss our guests,” Sir Paris advanced cautiously, as the coach drew quite near home.

“Yes,” agreed Diana, “I miss them so much that I was half-minded to stay at home and so be ready if Lieut— if either of them got back in time for supper. I do not like to have them find the house empty.”

“Why, ’tis scarcely empty,” her uncle parleyed, “with Mistress MacBain there to make every effort for their comfort.”

“When I choose to show hospitality,” Diana proclaimed, “I choose to put into it myself, and not my paid dependents.”

“Captain Quillian tells me,” Sir Paris deployed, “that he wrote home to his wife how delightfully he was situated here, and that he gave you a very

proper character for a most notable housewife, as well as an exceedingly charming young creature."

Diana would fain have asked if Robert were by when this was said, but held her peace.

"I was speaking with General Oglethorpe the other day," Sir Paris now lined up, "of Lieutenant Marshall. I desired to know his exact standing, seeing that he is unmarried and thrown much in your company."

He paused timidly, but no angry reply coming, and Diana's expectant face revealing anything but displeasure at his speech, he plucked up spirit to continue. "The report was most favourable. Though American for several generations, the Marshall family was founded by a man of title. The young man is of good blood and good means; and I think that you and I could both attest, my dear, of good disposition and character, as well."

"As to means," quoth Mistress Diana, with a toss of her proud young head, "that is a matter of which I think nothing in the choice of my — of —"

"But of which older people will still be thinking, my love," urged Sir Paris, emboldened by her complaisance.

Agnes, also, took the privilege of a humble friend, and filed her protest against a course which she sought to believe the result of girlish pique and thoughtlessness.

"Mistress Diana," she began, hesitatingly, in the midst of a conversation upon other and more practical matters, "I am not sufficiently older than yourself to take upon me to advise you in your affairs; but being so young as you are, and very beautiful

— O, very beautiful and winning, too, I think — you must have been sought often in marriage. You ought, meseems, to remember that many gentlemen who come into your presence will be thinking of such things. I — O, I beg your indulgence, but — ”

“ Well, what means all this portentous preamble — this thundering in the index? Has any sighing swain made you an emissary to my good graces? ” inquired Diana, laughing, yet with an eager look in her eyes which Agnes could but note.

“ No. ’Tis about the young Lieutenant Marshall that I fain would speak to you. His devotion is apparent to all. He is but withheld by modesty and a sense of your worth and charms from declaring himself at once your suitor. Anybody must see that.”

“ Is it so, my Agnes? Ah, say it again. I never thought to have such words sound sweet to me. But you know the need I have in this matter. I would fain have a man’s name — and that presently — to patch my own, which has been sadly shredded by the tongue of gossip. I would have a man’s arm to strike for me when need is. I would have some one to carry my hatred of Archibald Cameron to the tip of a sword! ”

Agnes had listened with a face which grew paler and paler. Now she broke in, hurriedly, “ You can build no peace on a foundation of hate, Mistress Chaters.”

“ Ah, that is all there is to my heart now! ’Tis one glowing, white-hot mass of hatred for Archibald Cameron.”

“ I think you do yourself wrong,” returned Agnes, in the slow, laboured tone of one in actual physical

distress. "I cannot think that you would so lead this sweet young man on and cozen him, making him to believe you his lover, hoping by his means to compass the death or serious injury of one who may have been in fault —"

Diana laughed bitterly. "*Who may have been in fault, Mistress MacBain?* These are strange words — to me. In your efforts to reproach me, you would even speak a good word for Sathanas himself. The man Cameron was a fiend. I tell you he was a devil."

Agnes looked at her with a curiously blanched face. "Indeed, you mistake me. I certainly have no good word to say for that man — to you. And yet, I would fain put out a hand to stay you from going into that which should be to a woman life's crown and greatest blessing — love and marriage — in so unworthy a spirit."

"Agnes, Agnes, I forgive you," returned Diana, lightly. "You old maids rate men and marriage very high. For my part, I shall marry the man, if it suits me; and I shall put him from my doors, when once I am Mistress Robert Marshall — if that suits me better. I have not yet decided how I shall play my part in this matter; but doubt not, Agnes, I shall play it worthily and as a lady should."

These suggestions that Robert Marshall would soon propose for her hand pleased Diana mightily, and put her in a good humour, as those who made them could not fail to see. What did not suit her so well, was the young man's conservative course. In spite of his dimples and his trick of blushing — because of them, perhaps — he insisted upon "playing the parental," as she bitterly phrased it, and

construing her advances as addressed to the entire army — or the cause — rather than to himself, personally.

Agnes was gone down to inspect a new-come boat-load of provisions from up the river, and was storm-stayed. Sir Paris, well knowing along what road peace lay, had retired above-stairs to share Belinda's elegant seclusion. Having no authority — no influence even — he chose to ignore what he could not prevent, nor even modify.

"Belinda," he said later, when, with Junius dressing his curls, and the morsel of dog lying on his knees, he addressed himself to the more favoured animal, "you must confess that she makes love to the boy like a goddess. Myself, I could never enjoy a hunt — a chase — for spendthrift and woful sympathy with the quarry. — But she does it well. — How else should she do it? A Chaters! Why, Hector was better than any lover in a play. And myself, Hastie could not say I was lacking in any touch of the perfect victim of love."

Belinda indulged in a weary yawn, and shrugged contemptuously. Above Sir Paris's mass of silken ringlets Junius's black face bent, mute, sardonic — a sneer in ebony.

The half-plaintive, abstracted voice took up the theme again.

"She hath set out for to woo him with the fire and dash of a bold young blade such as her father was. Yet she goes to it in such a pretty, maidenly fashion that we cannot but see that 'tis Providence which hath made women generally shy and inapt for such campaigns. Otherwise would all men be wedded, or mad for love."

Below stairs, in the big drawing-room, the two young people had sat unchaperoned all the dark, stormy forenoon.

Now, Diana rose and stood at the window, chafing silently at the young lieutenant's backwardness. The rain fell in long slant lines athwart the magnolias and limes of her tropical garden. A sea wind came in fierce gusty puffs and twisted the dripping pomegranates, or, sinking to a relative calm, combed the long fringes of the mimosa with unquiet fingers.

"A miserable day," she fretted; "come and look upon it."

"A most kind day," corrected Robert, at her shoulder, "which gives me this hour with you. Is the sun not shining?—I can never tell what the weather, if you let me bide by you—all days are fair when so spent."

Diana turned, blushing, abashed by his ardour. The fire of those eyes which met hers, still further daunted her. She had evoked this spirit, she had been at pains to bid it forth; and now that it was answering, her courage flagged. She had to remind herself that he was but a boy scarce older than herself—in spite of his inches and his breadth of shoulder. Was she to be put about by a boy?—a green provincial lad? Nay, she'd mould him to her will, and use him at her pleasure.

But her eyes were downcast and her cheeks still flushed as she said, "I am most ungrateful. 'Tis the rain which keeps you here with me—and I have faulted it. Come, sit thee in the window-seat beside me and tell me more of the fair Virginian maids."

"D I say they were fair?"

"So much and so oft that I am quite ashamed of

my swarthy cheeks — and gray eyes with them! After so much beauty and gentility, you must find me a sort of squaw — is't not so? Come, tell me. Tell me what you think of one Diana Chaters."

"If I dared," breathed the boy; "oh, if I dared tell you *all* I think of you!"

The girl showed a face which went pale and red with startling suddenness. There was a little set smile upon her lips — but her eyes had the look of a soul in pain. "Fie!" she began, faintly, "fie, sir, a soldier — and afraid! Come, tell me; however ill your opinion, 'twill be kindly spoken, and the telling will help me to amend those faults which you see largest. I — I — I would fain merit your liking — I —" She came to a heartsick stop.

"You? Faulty?" cried the young fellow, his glowing eyes devouring her downcast face. "No, you are the one created being without blemish! Shall I dare really to tell you how I always think of you? Shall I —"

Diana, he, face averted, put a hand back against the cushions of the settle to steady herself, and nodded silently.

"Then, if I may, 'tis not your beauty — though 'tis enough to rob a man of sleep — nor even your wit and grace and charm I think of first. 'Tis your heart of love —"

Diana turned upon him a startled gaze. "My heart — my heart of love!" she echoed.

"Shall I go on? You will not think me presuming? You will understand?" And as she bent her head once more, he half-whispered, "You seem to me, in spite of your beauty and bearing — which might become an empress, a goddess — like a



*"TELL ME WHAT YOU THINK OF
ONE DIANA CHATERS"*

little trusting child. Your tenderness goes out to all about you so that even I, who am as a stranger, have a generous, an unearned share in it. I feel ever in me the longing to protect you from a world which might misunderstand this royal generosity. I would I were near to you — a kinsman — deserving of your sweet faith, that I might warn you how a man treated by you as I have been — shown such frank favour — if he were not all a man, might presume upon it. I would I were — ”

“ My father, mayhap,” supplied Diana, with biting irony.

Young Marshall regarded her with a grave smile. The query seemed to him one of such utter, touching innocence, that he was the more enchanted. “ Aye,” he answered, steadily, “ your father. You have great need of a father’s care. With all your beauty and wit and grace and charm, which must transport any man upon whom you deign to look kindly, you have so tender a heart that those who are thus ravished of all judgment need a sterner spirit than yours confronting them, to bid them keep their place — and distance.”

The poor badgered girl could have wept with shame and vexation. That he should thus defend her from himself; that he should be tempted, but too high-minded to proffer the swift wooing she desired! It was humiliating.

As she sat turned away from him, one slender hand shielding her troubled face, seeking for composure, and struggling with the sense of defeat which weighed her down, she felt the other hand, which hung nerveless at her side, lifted gently. It was held lightly a moment, and she knew that young

Marshall was studying its perfections; then a pair of tremulous warm lips were pressed upon it, in a caress which their owner evidently strove to keep within the bounds of customary gallantry.

"Fear not," Marshall's voice breathed in her ear, "that I shall misunderstand you, or presume. I feel too deeply, where you are in question, to do so."

He straightened himself and stood looking down at her bent head. His heart misgave him that he had done ill in what he had said; and yet he knew not how to amend it except by observing greater coldness and distance in his intercourse with his young hostess.

"But you are weary of this topic," he began, with an attempt at unconcern. "'Tis strange that however much I resolve, when next I have the privilege of talking with you, upon sensible matters, our conversation seems ever to drift toward this theme which must offend you."

Diana's face flamed. She fancied a covert irony in the speech. And yet when she looked at the boy, and his clear, honest eyes met hers with such winning frankness, she set it down, as the phrase ran in her angry mind, to "mere brute stupidity," and asked, abruptly:

"What of the grand funeral which General Oglethorpe is preparing to give the Mico of the Creeks, old Toma-chi-chi?"

The inquiry seemed to bring something to Robert's mind, for, with a word of apology, he hastily drew out his watch and looked at it. "Time flies in your enchanted presence," he said. "I should have been with the general this hour, making

arrangements for the military honours which are to be paid the old chief. Will you be there to look upon the cortége, Mistress Diana?" he asked, wistfully, "for I must indeed go now."

"Why, yes," returned Diana, indifferently, "I think that I shall go, unless it should be raining as it is now. The officers from Charles Town have not yet arrived, have they?" and she studied his face anxiously.

"Not yet," returned young Marshall, "but they are shortly expected. May I promise the general that you will go to-morrow to see the old Indian buried?"

"Nay," returned Diana, sweetly — as sweetly as though rage and resentment were not burning in her heart — "you need make no promise to the general. I would far liefer make a promise to you, since you ask it. I shall certainly be there."

When the young man had gone, Diana, alone in her room, dropped her weary head upon her arms. But instead of the torrent of tears which another woman would have shed, she sat dry-eyed and bitter-lipped. Few girls of her age would have persisted in such a design, in the face of so much discouragement and humiliation. It was characteristic of the force and fibre of the young creature that opposition merely tempered her resolution, as fire tempers steel.

"I will be Mistress Robert Marshall," she said, "before the young fool leaves for Augustine. And for every pang his blundering awkwardness hath caused me, he shall pay back tenfold. Diana Chaters suing — courting a man's favour — offering herself — making herself cheap! Oh, 'tis too much!

'Tis past bearing — almost. And yet I can bear it, and I will, rather than surrender my purpose. There will come a day of reckoning, my fine young sir!"

She went to the window and watched Marshall, booted and cloaked, breasting the tempest in the direction of headquarters. Suddenly, while she looked, he turned as though she had called his name. The sight of her at the window sent the blood to his face. He kissed his glove to her lightly, but his adoring eyes said more.

Again, as she retreated from the window and left the gallant, manly figure in the rain, she felt his lips upon her hand. And this time, when she went back to the chair and her bitter brooding, she wept.

"To kiss my hand — after all I had said to him! 'Twas an affront! Any creature with the spirit of a man in him would have been on his knees, beating his breast and swearing he loved me — though every word were a lie, 'tis what a man should say — oh!" she strangled a sob fiercely — "while this fish — this turnip" — and again the sob. "But 'twill be the greater triumph — and he shall pay for every pang I now endure."

CHAPTER XI.

THE GIFT OF A GRAVE

"AND out of this world when we shall wend,
To heaven's bliss our soules bringe;
God grant us grace it may soe bee!
Amen! say all, for charitye."

AT his town on the Savannah the old Chief Toma-chi-chi lay dying.

Ninety-seven years had he seen; and as himself said, "All good years, for in all of them I learned." And now, when his aid was most needful to the infant colony, his days were come to an end.

Of all considerations which may fret a man at the laying down of his life, only this one seemed to reach the chief — that he could not remain to hold his people in amity with the English; that he, who had been their Mico and their war-chief, might never again lead them to battle against the treacherous and insolent Spaniard for their new-found friends.

He had trusted himself to the sea, (and what his fellow savages considered the yet more dubious and untrustworthy kindness of the white men,) and visited England with his wife, his heir Toonahowi, and ten Indian head-men. He had seen the wonders

of the white men's state; he had begged of their king the word of wisdom for his own poor people, that they might grow in knowledge.

The gentle Moravians joined him in building, at Yamacraw Bluff, the log schoolhouse which they called Irene, where the Wesleys and Whitefield at times taught and preached. And now he was leaving the activities and achievements of a long and busy life to set forth on his last solitary journey.

He was a poor man. Banished from his own people, the lower Creeks, for political reasons, though still in amity with them, he had gathered other banished men about him and become their Mico. A generous soul, he divided among his people all gifts which came to him, and chose a material poverty which brought with it spiritual wealth.

He had advised Oglethorpe's mission to the Indians at Coweta town when that brave man penetrated three hundred miles into the wilderness to treat with the assembled Indian chiefs. Now he longed to see once more this brother soul, and learn, ere he passed, the outcome of that undertaking.

He had been raised upon a bed in the centre of his tent, whose curtains were looped so that the glories of a brilliant October day might be visible to his dying eyes. Beside him his wife, Scenauky, dumb, wistful, plied a great fan of eagle feathers. Toonahowi, who was to act as interpreter, conducted the general from the landing.

Outside, in the clear sunshine, the tall, fine-looking, soft-spoken head-men sat and smoked. Within, the old man, lying stark as one already dead, painfully quiescent save for the fluttering of the fine, thin nostril at each silent breath, opened

great eyes, made larger by his leanness, and cried out:

"Now may the Great Spirit be praised, who took not away my breath in the night, nor sealed up mine eyes at dawn — that I may once more see thy face, O my friend, ere I go hence!"

The general came swiftly forward, and clasped the frail dark hand. "I am setting forth upon a journey, Toma-chi-chi," he said. "I go presently to Frederica, and know not when I shall return; I could not go without saying farewell to my friend."

"I, too," murmured the chief. "I, too, go now upon a voyage, — one whose end I know not."

"Will you take counsel for the voyage? Will you have help upon that way?" hesitated Oglethorpe. "Mr. Whitefield is very fain to speak with you of these matters, if he may."

"Help on that trail?" questioned the old Mico, with a faint, sad, little smile. "Nay, my white brother, that is what no man may have. Short, short the time we walk in the sun, and then — darkness. Draw back the curtain when thy friend steps through — what seest thou? Naught. Upon that black and bitter journey, O white brother who hast been as a father to me, the best loved among us must go forth unsupported and uncompanied. The mother lets her weanling babe set its tender foot — the small, feeble foot that has not yet skill or strength to take one step — upon this dusky trail alone, while with torn hair and beaten breast she sits sick with weeping at the lodge's door. No, no. None can come with us here."

"Yet," persisted the white man, "there is a sign

that you might carry with you. Mr. Whitefield is most anxious that you be baptised."

Again that wintry smile played over the stern features. "He is a white man—and I am an Indian," the chief began, in a soft monotone; "and the babes of the white men have more knowledge than the chiefs of our tribes. But have they more wisdom? I doubt it. For see this child. He will come to me, who am an old man—and called, so that I have no time now for to learn—and he will set the water upon my brow for a sign. Then shall I go into the presence of the Great Spirit dishonoured. For God will say to me in that day, 'Toma-chi-chi, wherefore is this sign upon thy brow?' And I must answer him, 'Great Spirit, I know not. A child set it there, and I suffered it, not because I understood these matters, and was prepared for the step, but,'" and he turned his eyes lovingly upon Oglethorpe, "'but to please my friend.'

"Nay, my white brother, the God of my fathers will know me without that sign—and with it I were to him a shamed man, and a liar. But tell me—they have said, but I would have it from your own lips—how sped the mission at Coweta Town?"

"Why, right well," replied the other. "I went, as you advised, alone. We found a portion of the way cruel hard travelling. For two hundred miles we saw no living man; but in all the latter part of the journey we found by the path-side provisions which had been laid there for us. When we were come within forty miles of Coweta the chiefs came out to meet us; and never have any shown to me such joy in my coming, such gratitude and

welcome, as those people met me with, O friend. There were men from three hundred miles up, Cou-sees and Talapousees, who had come to the council, with Choctaws and Chickasaws; and they all felt a great pride that I trusted to come among so many warriors alone and unarmed. They brewed us the black drink — the Foskey — and we drank it together to cement their promise of warriors and aid."

The aged chief, during the recital, had raised himself and fixed eager eyes upon the narrator. Now he sunk back with a sigh. "You may let this your servant go in peace," he breathed. "For I see plainly that you have no need of him — you can deal with my people. They will trust and love you, even as I trust and love you."

"Not so," remonstrated the general; "it is a sad misfortune to us that you go from us at this time."

The old man answered with a sweeping, deprecatory gesture of his hands. "An Indian's wisdom," he whispered. "It is true that I have plucked from the wild gardens that Nature plants for herself in her inmost holds. The fruits I bring are not unwholesome, but surely they are of strange, perhaps of unwelcome, flavour to the white man's palate."

The general shook his head. "He who has lived close to the heart of earth and her creatures," he said, "has learned wisdom."

"That which I am the world knows; that which I would be my heart feels; but that which I might have been, had my friend but come bringing the white man's wisdom when I was a child, the Great Spirit alone can say. It is too late for me. Toona-

howi — the young men — may profit by it. For me, my legs are as the legs of a grasshopper, and my breath visits my lips unwillingly. I shall soon be gone."

A dignified little party of the head-men had entered at Toonahowi's back; now the foremost of them stood out from among the others, and said, gravely, "The white father speaks truth. The hearts of your people are turned to water when they think upon your loss. Who now will lead us to victory? Who will give us good counsel?" and he covered his face with his blanket.

"Nay, my friend," replied Toma-chi-chi, "fret not at the framing of things. There draws near to us on steady foot a day which shall adjust it all; a day when thy bound jaws shall make no appeals, and the stiffened lips of thy mortal foe speak no reply; a day when praise and blame, and wisdom and folly, shall pass thine ears like winds blown. And there dogs its shadow a time, but little more remote, when dust shall lie thick upon the thing which you desired as upon the thing which you desired not; upon the good and the evil which we have wrought; when the blow which we have given and the blow which we have taken shall be one."

A moment later, looking with sombre eyes at the group of chiefs and head-men, he began again in his solemn monotone:

"What is the life of an Indian? It is as a lodge built in the wilderness. In a few days it is builded — and in yet a few more it is decayed. But our white brethren do not build lodges of skins. These whom you have seen make their habitations of wood; and overseas they do plant such piles of

rock as their children and their children's children's children shall not see the end of. Yet the white man dies as the Indian dies. It is as a people that the white men will live — it is as a people that we would not die!" he cried, with a sudden exceeding bitterness in his tone. "And, O, my poor people who build but graves, hearken to the voice of wisdom. Let the white father teach ye, that as a people ye perish not off the face of the earth."

The chiefs answered, in their soft, grave voices, with promises of fealty to Oglethorpe's settlements and docility to his teachings; and drew apart, leaving the two friends to take farewell.

The day lengthened, as Oglethorpe sat talking to this rare spirit which was even then poisoning for flight. It had been not only bright, but warm, with something of the fierce ardour of midsummer. Now, its hot insistence cooled, its eager, unshrinking, unpitying gaze softened. It no longer poured forward, but looked yearningly back, retrospective, regretful, and kind; and the white man rose in its tender, benignant twilight, to bid his old Indian friend and ally good-bye and Godspeed.

After the formal farewells had been made, the sick man turned restlessly on his couch of skins.

"I have said to you," he repeated, in a faltering voice, "that the Indian builds naught but graves — 'tis all I have to offer for an endless monument betwixt me and thee that I did love thee well. Take it then. Make my grave among my white brothers, in their town, for a sign to them that shall come after of Toma-chi-chi's love and good-will, and the love and good-will that he is fain to build between his people and the white men."

And so it came about that this man lies sleeping still in the heart of a busy city. And it was in the after-time even as he had meant that it should be — that grave, level with the streets, raised a bulwark, builded a fortress, such as no earthen walls nor buttresses of living rock could have set about the town. And in all the years of Indian warfare which came in the times when Oglethorpe with his masterly Indian policy was gone, Savannah was never attacked.

Could a Creek fight above the grave of him whose last words had been counsel to love the newcomers? The old Mico kept effective watch and ward. Living he aided, and dead he protected.

In the *Gentleman's Magazine* of some months later, we read this quaint account of the death and the succeeding ceremonies: —

“SAVANNAH IN GEORGIA, Oct. 10, 1759.

“King Tomo-chi-chi died on the 5th, at his own town, 4 miles from hence, of lingering Illness, being aged 97. He was sensible to the last Minutes, and when he was persuaded his death was near he showed the greatest Magnanimity and Sedateness, and exhorted his People never to forget the favours he had received from the King when in England, but to persevere in their Friendship with the English. He expressed the greatest tenderness for Gen. Oglethorpe, and seemed to have no concern at dying but its being a time when his life might be useful against the Spaniards. He desired his Body might be buried among the English in the Town of Savannah, since it was he that had prevailed with the Creek Indians to give the Land, and had assisted

in the founding of the Town. The Corpse was brought down by Water. The General, attended by the Magistrates and People of the Town, met it upon the Water's Edge. The Corpse was carried into Percival Square. The pall was supported by the General, Col^d Stephens, Col^d Carteret, M^r Lemon, and M^r Maxwell. It was followed by the Indians and Magistrates and People of the Town. There was the Respect paid of firing Minute Guns from the Battery all the time during the Burial, and funeral — firing with small Arms by the Militia, who were under arms. The General has ordered a Pyramid of Stone, which is dug in this Neighbourhood. to be erected over the Grave, which being in the Centre of the Town, will be a great Ornament to it, as well as testimony of Gratitude.

“Tomo-chi-chi was a Creek Indian, and in his youth a great Warriour. He had an excellent Judgement and a very ready Wit, which showed itself in his Answers on all Occasions. He was very generous, giving away all the rich presents he received, remaining himself in a wilful Poverty, being more pleased in giving to others, than in possessing himself; and he was very mild and good-natured.”

To Diana, in the house on St. Julian Street, came Lit, to tell her of the funeral arrangements. There was scarce a hint of Indian in all the girl's dress, adornment, or belongings. Instead, the influence of Diana Chaters was observable in costume and carriage.

When Diana had said that she would go — in her coach, which Lit exclaimed would please the general

— and taking Sir Paris (and Mistress MacBain if she wished to come) Lit asked, a little timidly for her:

“You thought my gown and hood and all very fine and genteel, Mistress. Would you — might I come with you — ”

“Indeed and truly, may you, you very handsome and genteel young lady,” interrupted Diana, quickly. “I should have asked you to do so, but I supposed your father would — your being ” — and she broke off in some confusion.

The burning red flamed up over Lit's dark face. “Being a Creek, that my father would want me along with them,” she finished for Diana. “But, Mistress, when I told him I would not do it; that, if I came at all to the old Mico's funeral, 'twould be along o' white people, — ‘my own people,’ I said, — he said nothing. He but laughed a bit, and let me go so carelessly that — that I — ”

“Yes?” prompted Diana, kindly.

“Well, I thought — I've often thought — I said to him, ‘I'm no more a Creek than you are — nor nigh so much. 'Tis only one of your lies you have to plague me with.’ ”

“What did he answer?”

“Naugh” But laughed again, and looked slyly at me.”

Diana had had her coach brought round, and Sir Paris, Mistress MacBain, Lit, and herself, at Robert's suggestion, drove at an early hour to the landing that they might see the funeral cortège come down the river. Toma-chi-chi's town was four miles from Savannah by land, and six miles as the stream wound.

The Savannah lay between its banks, broad, placid, beautiful. Down its slow current about ten o'clock the canoes began coming. The braves were painted for the funeral, although the ceremonial was to be in the English fashion. The great bands of black across the forehead and upon the cheeks of those stern faces, gave an indescribable air of solemnity.

Finally came the great periagua in which the old Mico himself was laid. General Oglethorpe had sent up a coffin, and this having been placed upon the bier in the centre of the boat, contained the old man's form. He lay open to the heavens, his thin brown hands crossed in Christian fashion upon his breast. The general had asked that certain of their Indian customs be not omitted, so that his bows and arrows, the most beloved of his weapons, lay at his feet. Beside him, with the blankets thrown over their heads for mourning, were ten braves. These motionless figures in their enshrouding wrappings, you would have said, must lose all human expression; but it was not so. The grief expressed by the simple lines of each bowed and immovable form was beyond belief.

"They look sadder," Diana said, "than people you can see weeping, whose tears you may behold."

Arrived at the landing, these braves raised the coffin, bore it to land, and placed it upon the support which was in readiness to receive it, and with grave and sweeping obeisance. Toonahowi, nephew of the dead chief, and now head-man and Mico of the tribe, surrendered the body to the English friends who were to do it honour. The coffined form was lifted by General Oglethorpe and his

fellow pall-bearers, and followed by a long train of Indians walking two and two, magistrates, and the people of the town.

A tall, stately figure, with bearded face above the draping blanket, attracted Diana's attention as the funeral cortège marched solemnly past. She realised a moment after that it was Buccleugh. Reverent, dignified, and looking strangely more appropriate in his half-barbaric guise than in civilised clothing, the tall man walked by the bier of him that had been grandsire to his son.

At Percival Square the pall was laid down, and the prayers for the dead were read, minute-guns from the battery booming out their message of respect for this great military ally of the English in Georgia. Last of all a company of forty men was wheeled into the square, and a volley fired over the grave.

Robert, with Oglethorpe, came to the coach door when the funeral was over, and talked a few moments to Diana, whom the general smilingly called sometimes Mr. Quartermaster, and sometimes Mr. Commissary. The old Mico being now gone, he told her that Toonahowi would be the Creek war-chief, and would soon gather his warriors for departure to the front, and that he would advise her as to the monies she was to contribute for corn and meat for these Indians. Laying a hand on Robert's shoulder, he added:

"You have here, Mistress Chaters, the man who will both collect these stores and distribute them."

This all meant that Robert had perhaps but a week longer to be an inmate of Chaters House, and both young faces looked grave at the thought. He

rode home at the coach wheel, on Diana's side, bending down to talk to her in a lowered tone, presumably of forage and supplies, while she raised to his a pale face, across which now and again an expression of sharp anxiety flitted.

And Lit, on the front seat, facing them, thought them as pretty a pair of young lovers as ever her experienced eye had beheld.

CHAPTER XII.

PROPHECIES

"THE auld wight's ee was blear and dim,
Loud he did rant and rave;
He waled to some a gudelye weird,
He gave to some a grave."

SO matters went on in the utmost contentment, Mistress Diana winning Captain Quillian's heart by tender inquiries about his wife and family whom he had left behind him in England, stooping even to conciliate the admiration of poor Kilsyth, (who did undoubtedly squint,) but most of all showing to Robert Marshall a frank tenderness, an open liking, which was very unlike the manner enjoined upon young ladies of breeding and fashion in that day.

It was the week before Christmas when the boy came hurrying into the house, and, failing to find Diana below stairs, searched for her in the garden. She was not there, but after he had looked about in all the arbours, a gay young voice called from an upper window:

"I wonder what Lieutenant Marshall can be searching for?" And looking up, he beheld her leaning on the sill laughing at him.

"I think you know, Mistress Diana, what I am ever

searching for," he said, taking off his hat and bowing to her, "but in this instance I am in haste. I thought it might be that you and Mistress MacBain would be amused to go down to the common and see the booths. 'Tis almost like a fair, and I have an hour or two at my disposal just now, so that I might accompany you."

"Indeed we should like nothing better," answered Diana, without hesitation, and the two appeared almost immediately, with silken hoods drawn over their heads, and the long loose cape of the time thrown over their house dresses.

"Shall we do thus?" inquired Diana. "Do persons of quality go? Must we dress ourselves more finely?"

"I wonder what person of quality could fail to find you fine enough?" returned young Marshall; and together the three set out for the common, which did indeed present the appearance of a country fair.

The few Scotch colonists who had remained behind when New Inverness was settled, and the many others who had chosen Savannah as a stopping-place, brought with them the pleasant customs of Hogmenay. All day long there had been small boys raising the Chaters knocker and demanding Hogmenay gifts, which were duly presented to them.

These were largely lowland Scotch; but as they entered the ground between the line of booths, they met an old piper, a tall, gaunt Highlandman in plaid and bonnet, who spoke no English. Diana was in one of her wild humours, and must see everything, must stop and hearken to the man's Gaelic speech; but homesick Agnes pulled her hood about her face, and stood with bent head forbearing to tell

her mistress that she might easily have acted as interpreter. Beyond the line of booths a great tent of skins had been put up, and in it Indian women were serving native dishes, not only to their own people but to many of the traders and colonists among whom these were much liked. Vast bowls of succotash; great pones of chestnut-bread, moist and sweet, made of the maize meal, with whole boiled chestnuts stuck about through it thick as plums in a Christmas pudding; tuckahoe, broiled venison, a stew of fish, and unlimited pohickory, made the feast a thing to be remembered.

Diana and her party went into this tent, and seating herself at the long board on trestles from which the viands were served, she professed an intention to taste of every dish.

Behind the board stood an Indian woman, more nearly black or brown than copper-coloured. Her low-browed countenance was seamed with myriad tiny wrinkles, like cracks in iron rather than furrows in flesh.

This strange, dark, unfriendly squaw was Weeping Moon, daughter of a considerable chief among the Creeks, an only and favourite child of her father. She was not, in fact, old, but Indian women are prone to look like grandams at twenty and hags at thirty.

Buckaloo had felt an actual attachment for one Indian woman, the mother of his little son Salequah, and granddaughter of Toma-chi-chi, a patient-browed, graceful slip of a girl, who adored him, and died after one year of marriage, leaving the child an infant to his care. Weeping Moon he married shortly thereafter, because she brought him

a large dowry of horses, cattle, and gear, and by this alliance he obtained an enormous cession of Creek lands.

The woman herself was scarce considered in the bargain, but she proved a character to reckon with. A typical savage, morose, sullen, cruel, and crafty, she cared for no soul on earth except her man; and afterward, when she came to bear that bitter stigma to the savage woman, barrenness, she set her whole soul upon the adoration of her husband's Indian son. If he was not the child of her body, he was at least a child of her race, and a link to the white man who treated her at first with such contemptuous indifference.

After some years of her strong, still, passive influence, Buckaloo found himself more or less swayed by her. And this influence was always to the baser side. Lying and greedy, the woman had much force of a silent, secret, and evil kind. She had degraded Buckaloo, though he would have laughed to scorn the idea that she moved him one doit in his interests and doings.

Lit, she hated. The girl's freedom from Indian traits, her influence with her father, the bright companionship between them, — all these were so many and personal offences to the squaw; and in true Indian fashion she piled a long score against the girl, to be paid out when opportunity should serve.

As Diana sat trying to talk to this woman, calling often upon Marshall to act as interpreter, since he knew many of the Indian tongues as well as his own, Agnes drew her attention to an Indian lad sitting near the front of the tent, motionless as a

little bronze statue, beautiful as a youngling god. Diana turned to examine the child with interest.

"But, what is it about him, Agnes, that is familiar?" she queried, knitting her brow intently. "Oh, I have it! It is because he looks like Lit."

She glanced about her, guessing it possible that these were Lit's people, when on the instant Lit herself rose from a bench in the back of the tent, and came forward somewhat unwillingly.

"Good day to you, Mistress Chaters, and to you, sir, and to you," she said, bowing to Diana's party. "Are you trying to eat the messes that we Indians live on?"

The "we" came out with bitter emphasis, and Diana, who was quick in sympathy where this girl was concerned, saw and felt for the spirit which was behind it.

"Who is the beautiful little lad over there by the door, Lit?" she asked. "He looks too handsome for an Indian, only because he looks too handsome to be a boy at all, but more like some great artist's statue."

"That is my brother," turning fond eyes upon the child. "I would my father could hear you speak so of him, for if he loves nothing else in the world, he loves Salequah. Come, Mistress, let us get out of this; there is no interest here," she said, looking again with contemptuous disfavour at the squaws and their work. "Do you not want your fortune told? There is an old man in a tent bevond here who tells fortunes grandly."

"What is he?" asked Marshall. "A gipsy?"

"Nay, a Scotchman, — a Highlandman, very old. Dad says he was an old man when he was a lad,

back in Scotland, and gipsying and telling fortunes then, though the story went that he had been a priest in his youth — and unfrocked for some black doings, I'll be bound. He hath been with the Indians in this country, the Five Nations, whom we Creeks call the Back Enemy, and sells charms and simples which he says he learned from their medicine-men. But 'tis certain he hath the gift of second sight, can find things which are lost, and bring them that are separated together. O, he told me a fine fortune. I am to wed a preacher, if you like. Nay, I am to preach myself, and be a saver of souls!"

The incongruous prophecy excited much amusement; and Lit, as the thought occurred to her that the fortune-teller would be glad of some information concerning his guests, since with it he could dazzle them the more, said, "By your leave I will go and warn him of your coming, and you may pass down on the other side where the French people are showing off their fruits and flowers."

"It seems a strange thing, does it not," Marshall asked, "to see flowers shown at a Christmas fairing?" He was buying a bunch of white Christmas roses for the ladies as he spoke, and the plump little Frenchwoman behind the counter nodded and laughed and showed her teeth, and was mightily cheered to be answered in her own language.

"These people speak in most barbarous tongues," she cried, waving her hand indiscriminately toward the Scotch, Indians, English, and negroes about her; "and when you have learned one outlandish word you find that the next barbarian you meet knows nothing about it. They have so many tongues, 'tis as though the Tower of Babel had just fallen."

Beyond the fruits and flowers of the Huguenots, was a sober little stall presided over by one or two stolid German girls, where the Salzburgers from New Ebenezer were showing skeins of creamy raw silk, bunches of unwound cocoons, the copper basins used in their manipulation; while one girl wound the silk, and another with a taller wheel spun the newer fibre destined to displace it in Georgia, — the beautiful fleecy cotton.

Over to the right, a great din and uproar had broken out.

"Come!" cried Diana, gaily, "come quickly; let us see what's to do yonder!"

Robert hesitated. "I think you ladies should remain here, while I —"

"O, no," coaxed Diana, "we want to see as well."

And in the end they all three went together, and found a rout and rabble of small boys baiting and beating to death an alligator, which General Oglethorpe had snared and sent to Savannah for this purpose.

These early colonists had a most mighty horror of the great reptile, and could by no other means be convinced of its helplessness upon land. Most gruesome and terrifying tales of the doings of alligators had been sent home to England by travellers in these regions, and the general very wisely concluded that the sight of one of these creatures being done to death by small boys would do more to cure this folly than all the homilies ever spoken or written.

Now, as they swept past small Scotch lads in homespun kilties, who had torn off their bonnets and were waving them as they yelled and ran; young

Indians almost naked; small blacks with scarcely more clothing; a mercurial, bright-eyed, dark little Frenchman or two from Highgate, four or five miles south of Savannah; some fair, stolid Germans from Hampstead or up Ebenezer way, and a good sprinkling of English lads, Diana cried, laughing:

"Why, 'tis our population in little; look at it. How many nationalities are there, think you—besides that of the alligator, who is a native Georgian?"

The next booth was that of the seer who was to reveal the future to them. Lit having gone ahead and offered the old man information, had been coldly received. "Why," she cried, good-naturedly, "I only wanted to tell you their names so that you might scare 'em by having 'em down pat; I think 'twould be great fun. I have not forgot the fine fortune you told me. You gave me a preacher to my husband!" and she went off into a great fit of laughing. Recovering, "Ye e'en said I should preach myself!" she added, and laughed again.

The old Scotchman looked at her angrily from under his bushy brows. "And a preacher ye will be, ye unco', skirling, unrespectful young deevil," he announced.

Just then Lit's party darkened the augur's doorway, and he glanced up. He had scorned Lit's information, yet now apparently used it. "Mistress Diana Chaters," he said, looking past or through the young lady with a dull, filmy, introverted eye, "I see you have brought your husband wi' you."

Diana went red, and white, and glanced helplessly at Lit, whom she suspected of having procured this

oracle, and the old man added, "Ou, aye, he is not your husband just yet. But he will be, he will be."

Marshall had blushed like a girl; and now, attempting to conceal the pleasure he felt in the fortune-teller's words, he said to Diana, "If the man offends you with his talk, we will go elsewhere, Mistress Chaters."

"No, 'tis only nonsense," returned Diana, quickly. "Such prophecies go by contraries, sir; you need not be frightened."

"I, frightened?" whispered Marshall, dropping a little behind her, "I, frightened at such words, Mistress Chaters? Nay, you underestimate my bravery, or your charms, or both."

"Well, then," smiled Diana, putting out her hand to the ancient, "what am I to do, prophet? Do I cross your palm with silver?"

"You give me gold," he returned, promptly, "and I tell you something which you wish very much to know."

Then followed some mumbling, some general assertions such as most fortune-tellers deal in, so that Diana lost interest and was looking about the tent indifferently, when her ear caught the announcement, "You will succeed, Mistress, with that which you are now trying to do."

"Thank you, master fortune-teller," said Diana, drawing her hand away hastily, "that alone is worth the gold. Let us stop there."

"Nay, we'll no stop there," the old man pursued, unmoved, "I see a long journey before you."

"Back to England, no doubt," assented Diana. "Why, yes, I hope to go back to England many times before I die."

"Nay, but I see you on foot and a-horseback, and in a poor silly boat, on unknown, dubious waters, travelling among a strange and savage people, seeking — aye, seeking — one whom you shall not find."

"What nonsense!" cried Diana. "Come, Agnes, have your fortune told — or will you dare the Fates, Lieutenant Marshall?"

Agnes drew back with a shrinking that was partly distaste, partly a sort of fright. "Nay, I have had my fortune told by life, many years ago, and there is nothing new to tell."

"What!" said the wizard, angrily, "nothing new to tell, is there?" He was evidently incensed at being cheated out of his fee. "I might tell you, Mistress, where your grave would be — if that would please you?"

"'Tis no matter to me," returned Agnes, wearily. "'Twill be out of Scotland, that I know."

"And outside the kirkyard — that I can tell you, also."

"Keep a civil tongue, soothsayer," put in Marshall, good-naturedly, laying down a double fee. "The lady does not wish her fortune told, so I will pay you for not telling it."

Something in the young man's voice and manner seemed to please and appeal to the old charlatan. With a new and gentler movement, he took up Robert's hand and held it for a moment with a pretence of studying the lines.

"A good hand," he said; "the hand of an honest man; a hand to strike for the right. I will say to you, young sir, that you shall compass your heart's desire; 'tis what few of us do in this world. But I see a great happiness in store for you. Aye, 'tis

sweetness from aloes and colocintida; beauty and light and love, out of the very pit of despair."

Robert and Diana stood arrested, listening half-protestingly, and in intense silence, her eyes fixed upon the ground, his upon her. Lit, over by the doorway, watching the movements of the crowd at a distant point of the field, now cried out that the racing was already on, and bade her companions come with her if they would find places whence to view it.

The huddle of booths on the Savannah had grown up about the race-track, and the gathering was in reality a horse fair. The booths stood to the townward side of a great enclosure which, done off into smaller pens and stalls, contained the animals that the various horse-traders had brought to Savannah for their winter's sales. The stock was mostly the small, alert, muscular Chickasaw breed, horses supposed to be descended from the Arabian barbs of old Spanish explorers, and rendered exceedingly tough and enduring by their environment and the necessity which they had been under for twenty or thirty generations of shifting for themselves in a wild state.

These, the Indians rode most beautifully, guiding them sometimes with a rope bridle around the lower jaw, and sometimes only with the spoken word or pressure of the knee or heel. In this latter case, man and horse seemed to be literally one, the horse moving apparently as a direct expression of the will of the mastering intelligence above.

Our young people paused and watched a lithe Indian, who rode a spotted horse, sweep from end to end of the central space among the pens, which was reserved for such exhibitions. The warrior carried

his bow and arrows, and when in full flight shot these at a mark, making, with many turns and swoops and curves, a wonderful picture.

Down at the farther end of the corral stood old Dad Buckaloo, beside his big black horse. There were quarter races toward, and the black horse had been entered with great odds against him (in spite of which he had, on an earlier occasion, won every race). The owners of other horses were remonstrating. One Scotchman protested, "We know weel enough, Buccleugh, that your horse is the deil, or in league wi' him; and however much start ye gi'e the field, he speaks a word in's old crony's lug, and awa' — he beats 'em all!"

Buckaloo swaggered and patted his horse's neck. "He's no in league wi' any worse deil than myself," he answered. "'Tis the riding does it, man."

"Aye, the riding!" retorted the other. "And were ye not in league wi' the deil, 'tis sure ye could not put such a wee bit splinter of a man-child astride that great black beastie, and make the horse mind the child. Ye speak to him, Buccleugh — I've seen ye do it."

Buckaloo shouted with laughter, and held his sides. "Well, see me do it once more, then!" he cried, the quarter race being ready for its start.

The slender, beautiful little half-breed boy, looking less than his years, answered to his call of "Sale-quah!" Buckaloo took the child, — naked except for a loin-cloth, and wearing for decoration a single long eagle's feather painted blood red, and stuck through the fillet about his heavy black hair, — lifted him and tossed him on the tall stallion's back, where he clung like a bird on a swaying bough, caught the

end of the single rein which the man flung after him, and would have been away. But Buckaloo, with a gleam of reminiscent merriment, threw his arm over the great horse's head, and drawing it down whispered some words in his ear, bursting into ill-repressed laughter as he did so.

"There, now," he said, turning triumphantly to the other, "I've told him to obey my son and win the race for me, and 'tis as good as done. 'Tis a great thing, Donny, to be in league wi' the powers o' darkness."

At Buckaloo's urgent invitation, Lieutenant Marshall remained with his two charges, to see the great black horse sweep around the small track, the shining, naked child bestriding him like a gleam of sunlight upon a thunder-cloud, and once more win the race.

As they left the enclosure, they noticed a steady trend of the crowd toward a vacant field beyond the booths, where they judged from the sounds a field preacher was speaking; and Marshall remarked that while so many went that way, none returned.

"I think they must leave the grounds and go toward town from there," Diana commented.

"No," said Agnes of Glasgow, "I see there is getting to be a mighty crowd about the man in the next field; and listen," for a booth vender was denouncing the preacher in no measured terms.

"Let the parsons keep to the churches, say I," the man remarked. "There they does no harm to nobody; but when they get out in the fields and spoil an honest man's trade wi' takin' away all his customers, why dom sich preachers, says I!"

His opinion was held by not a few of the keepers of booths.

So often was this complaint repeated before our party had reached the horse pen, that Diana's curiosity was aroused. Arriving at the real business end of the fair, where the horses were sold, they found the same state of affairs prevailing. Stalls were deserted, trades were unmade, and most of the horse traders had strolled away to listen to the field preacher.

"The man must be worth hearing," Diana said; "shall we not go and see?"

"With all my heart," returned Robert, whose holiday was drawing too swiftly to a close.

"But not to jeer at him," put in Agnes of Glasgow, jealously. "I think it possible that this may be Mr. Whitefield himself. The clergy of your church are much incensed against him, because when the people have no prayer-books, (and could not read them if they had,) he uses extemporaneous prayers. But he says he cares not for the scorn of his brother clergymen, and would rather have a large congregation in the open fields than a small one in a church, though it were the king's own chapel."

"Is he really a priest — and preaches in the fields? That, surely, is not seemly," declared Diana, with the sweeping and easy finality of youth.

"He is a priest now," Agnes answered. "He was but in deacon's orders when he wrought here last year. General Oglethorpe thinks well of him, and has him to preach in the chapel when Mr. Norris is at Frederica. You may sit under his ministrations within four walls, yet, Mistress Chaters."

"I would rather hear him in the fields, since he seems to prefer to preach there," Diana returned. "Come, let us go over and listen."

When they had started, she turned and asked of Agnes, "Why have I never heard of this man before?"

"Because he has but returned from England, where he took priest's orders. I knew that he was come back to this country, but not that he had reached Savannah," Agnes explained.

Robert, who sometimes acted as Oglethorpe's lieutenant in matters civil also, added, "He has been gathering monies in England for his Orphan House, and the trustees have granted him five hundred acres of land to build it upon, and to maintain it. But, there being many destitute children now, and no house built, I have been scurrying around all morning seeking one in which they might be presently placed. So far as I can see, this reverend gentleman is quite a remarkable person. I should think there might be some jealousy in the attitude his brother clergymen hold toward him."

CHAPTER XIII.

WHITEFIELD

"He loves love and his apostles twelve
He taught; but first he followed it himself."

A HISTORIAN of the time describes Whitefield as, "Above medium stature, graceful in every movement, of fair complexion and regular features, with dark blue eyes, lively and expressive, possessing a voice excelling alike in melody and compass, — its modulations accompanied by gestures, most appropriate and impressive."

Arrived in the field where the preaching was going on, the young people at first found difficulty in seeing the speaker at all. It was indeed this voice which instantly arrested attention. Of rare carrying power and feeling intensity, its very tones and cadences — even before the words uttered could be clearly distinguished, and while the speaker remained unseen — were as a trumpet-call to the heart's emotions, the soul's impulses; and those to whom he spoke laughed, wept, groaned, and were convicted of sins, which they themselves had scarcely realised the presence of till touched by the Ithuriel spear of his divine eloquence.

It was surely this gift of genuine oratory, this magnetic quality, which made his lightest exclama-

tion, his merest statement of fact, moving to his hearers; for the printed sermon, read to-day, gives no inkling of such effect.

As the group from Chaters House drew into the fringes of the dense crowd, this rich, vibrant voice was calling upon his hearers.

"I would speak to you, my brothers and sisters, of the nature of sins, or the nature of sin. You say, 'This man doth a great sin, and that man a little sin;' but behold I say to you, all sins are one; and that which thou hast called a little sin, its roots lay hold of the nethermost depths of hell, while its rank top flaunts in the face of heaven itself. For sin is a public thing. When one seeks you, speaking the words of repentance, you would draw your coats about you, hugging the sin inside, and flee so that no man may know of your misdoing. You would sit in your closets desiring that which is unlawful, and hold yourselves to be saints; but he who has desired a thing and done it not, and prayed not against it, and cast not out the devil which put the thing in his heart, is twice a sinner. He is once a sinner, because there is not one hair to choose between loving a sin and doing it. He is twice a sinner, because he is a coward. Loving and desiring a sin, fellowshiping and holding it good, he did it not, because he was afraid. All that you would offer to the glory of God, you must offer with a free heart, nor come unwillingly, nor hold back one secret sin to gloat over in private.

"I am come to tell you that God is not afar off in the heavens — He is *here!* I am come to tell you that you will not alone account to Him for your sins at some long-distant day. Now — *now* —

NOW, is the day of judgment! *To-day* is the appointed time! We stand before the bar, and the witnesses — a cloud of witnesses — are ready to testify for or against us. This being so — the day of reckoning being already come — what shall I say to those who will still offend? I cannot tell who to compare them to so fitly as those who pick pockets in the presence of the judge, or those who cut purses under the very gallows."

Here Robert, who had finally prevailed upon a man with an ox-cart on the outskirts of the gathering to accept payment for a seat upon it for the women-folk in his charge, helped them to their places on its high board seat, and from that elevation they thereafter saw as well as heard. When they had settled themselves, and turned their eyes toward the preacher, he was saying:

"We speak of the thief on the cross. We pity that thief; we deem him in extremity. But O, my brothers and my sisters, we are all thieves — and we are all upon the cross. *To-day* is the cross upon which we are crucified for yesterday's theft. There was not greater need that he should repent than that we should repent."

Suddenly he paused in his discourse, and pointed an accusing forefinger which seemed directed at the heart of every living creature before him. "Will you dare to tell me," he asked, in that low, thrilling, penetrating tone of which he was master, "will you dare to tell me that you are not a thief? Perchance you will say that you have stolen no material thing from your brother. It may be you have only defrauded him of that which was his birthright. You have stolen from him the love which you should

have given him. You have said you were a child of God, perchance, and he a sinner, and set him outside Christ's caring. Is it so that you have stolen? Or perchance it is his good name that you have filched from him. Like a thief in the night you spoke, when another listened, and said things of him which you had not said had he been there present. Is it thus you are a thief?

"I pray you, brothers and sisters, remember that there is but one commandment among all Christ's commandments which will build a perfect Christian character, and this one commandment is, *that ye love one another*. For why? If a man love himself, (as all men do,) he will not steal from himself. Then will he adopt the lying tongue and say that he does love his brother, when he will steal from him?"

An old woman in the edge of the crowd near the preacher was on her knees, beating her breast and sobbing. "I pray you, sir," she cried, "send for my daughter-in-law. I did tell my son about her that which was not true. I have stolen my son's love from that poor woman."

"Where is she?" the preacher asked, in a low tone of those near him. And later, when the younger woman was brought, a most affecting scene of reconciliation took place in this family.

Further out in the crowd, a grocer pressed forward, declaring to all who would listen to him that he had sold short weights, and so was a thief as the preacher had said. He was a man with a ferret face, and evidently a small, shrinking soul, whose error had been more through timidity than through actual wickedness.

"I have told it now," he wailed, as he knelt before

Whitefield. "My customers will never trust me again."

"No, my friend," said the preacher, putting his hand down on the shock head; "whom should they trust if not the man with bravery enough to confess his fault?" And the poor shallow fellow, his face sodden with weeping and grimy from being rubbed upon his smock-sleeve, made his way out from the crowd with more nearly the bearing of a man than he had ever assumed before.

A dozen penitents were crowded around the preacher, one girl confessing vanity, and that she had been unkind to her mother who was now dead; a young man that he had cheated at the dice; an inn keeper that he had sold unlicensed liquors; and all as earnestly detailing their faults as those sick might tell their symptoms to a physician.

A tall, black-bearded, kingly form came striding through the crowd from the edge, and Diana noted with a little gasp of surprise old Dad Buckaloo push in close to the preacher. "Friends," he said, "under each man's hide there dwell several fellows — often a motley crew, having widely varying traits and dispositions. This man" (with a wave of the hand toward Whitefield) "comes to the door, knocks, and calls upon that one he wants. We would oftentimes fain deny that we have such an one — honest and faithful — within. But 'tis in vain. Whitefield knows there is the honest man in every heart — God's witness. And when he comes and calls upon him, and bids him 'Rise and follow me,' there is no choice — must needs obey."

Dad paused and glanced across the press of listening people to where Francis Bennerworth stood. his

great eyes glowing with the enthusiasm aroused by the preacher's words, his face confessing, frankly as the face of a little child, his own sense of shortcoming.

"I trust, sir," Whitefield said to Buckaloo, courteously, "that your repentance — if repentance be indeed what you mean — takes a practical form."

Buckaloo thrust a hand into his breast. "It takes, my friend," he announced, "the form of good hard coin of the realm. I know no better way, when I have robbed a man — and I have robbed many in my time — than to go, if I repent me of the act, and pay him back that which I did steal from him."

With this, he came across and put into the astonished Bennerworth's hands the price which he had exacted of the young fellow for Hastie Wynne-woode's English stock horses.

"I robbed thee most foully," he declared. "I plied thee with liquor, my son, and I abstained myself (when 'twas mighty hard to do) that I should be sober and thou drunk when our trade was made. Take, then, that which I stole from thee; keep, too, the pitiful sum I paid thee for the horses; and give me in return, as full value of all, your forgiveness."

"God knows," returned Bennerworth, "you are not to blame. 'Twas luck that made you the purchaser of the horses, instead of another." And pressing closer to Whitefield, who was now giving individual counsel to the penitents about him, he asked some low-toned questions and received the answers to them.

All through this scene Lit had flushed, paled, bent forward as though to speak, and then drawn back and half hid herself behind the others. The conclu-

sion seemed to give her unmixed satisfaction. "'Tis true," she murmured, half to herself and half to those about her, "Dad robbed the poor soul — and I stood by consenting. It seems a preacher may be a man, after all," she added; and then, with a quick flash of laughter to offset her serious mood, "If I am to have a preacher like yon, I shall not mind so much."

The sermon was now done. Robert helped the ladies down from their high perch. Lit parted from them, and the three from Chaters House set out to return thither. The crowd had rapidly dispersed. Lit set a hesitating face to the tent of Weeping Moon and the squaw's satellites, her eyes turning ever wistfully toward the spot where Whitefield and Bennerworth alone remained. Her course sheered very wide toward the group, as her sidewise gaze showed her Bennerworth on his knees, his bright, uncovered head bowed, Whitefield standing with face raised to heaven, his outstretched hand on the pathetic, repentant young head. Her eyes filled with tears, and she turned sharply, and moved forward more rapidly.

Bennerworth, white and shaken, had drawn nearer to Whitefield as the crowd dispersed. He had waited while a dozen or more penitents told the preacher their more intimate troubles in lowered tones, and received counsel, encouragement or reproof.

When all were gone and Whitefield turning to go, Bennerworth caught his sleeve. "Sir — Master Whitefield," he began eagerly, "you have carried me so far with your talk, and now I want a bit more help from you." Then, in accents of fear and pain, he burst out, "For God's sake, tell me what I must

do to be saved!" He sank upon his knees, and it was at this moment that Lit last glanced at him and hurried away.

"Trust in God, my son; believe upon Christ, and Him crucified," answered Whitefield serenely.

"Nay, my case is not an ordinary one—"

"Is any case ordinary?" interrupted the preacher, gently.

"But mine is extraordinary bad," the other urged.

"I am the son of the rector of St. Giles, in Framewell, back in England."

"And I," murmured the priest, with a tenderness which robbed the words of bitterness, "am the son of an innkeeper—I have been a pot-boy. God's mercy does not reckon with these things."

"I have no difficulty in believing upon God. My father is a godly man, and I have been brought up in the Church. I had never a doubt of Christ as my Saviour. But the drink—the drink—the drink, man! Do you know what it is? It hath cast me out from my father's house, after I had disgraced him; it hath shamed me before every friend I ever possessed; and now it is losing me the woman I love. What must I do to be saved from *it*?" Bennerworth sobbed aloud.

"To be saved from *it*?" inquired Whitefield.

"And do you know so little of the nature of sin, my poor boy, as to think that you have in truth believed on God and been one of His chosen, and that He hath let this thing to come upon you? Nay, I say to you as I said before, repent and believe, and you shall be saved. All sins are one sin; the nature of them differeth not one from another by the thick-

ness of a hair. Serve God, and He will give you strength as it is needed."

"But," put in the penitent, "I must be restrained for my own good. If there was a place — a retreat. I wish sometimes I had been born in the old church, that I might have gone into a monastery, and there have found — have found —"

"Ah, would you dodge the devil in such fashion as that? Think you it can be done?" queried the preacher, half smiling. "Why, my son, in solitude, in silence, in the monastery, in these places to which poor cowards flee, there is the very stronghold of Satan. Go forth among your fellow men. Build the walls of the fortress about you with the truth of God. Every man carries his monastery, of this sort, within his own pure soul; and into it no evil thing can come. There he may retire."

"Think no more upon this matter of whether you shall drink or not drink; save your fellow creatures; preach the word of salvation to them. Look about upon these savages, these red Indians here, to whom the Word has never been carried; go among them as a brother; carry the truth of God in your heart; and believe me that there, upon that path, Satan cannot follow you."

"But the bodily necessity of it," groaned poor Bennerworth. "I have, in my evil days, forged chains of habit which I cannot break."

"Truly you speak," said the preacher. "But God can and will break them for you. I believe as truly as I believe I stand here, that you are the chosen of the Lord to carry his Word to a people who have not heard it. And as for this petty failing of the flesh, it will drop from you as the bark

drops from the shoulders of one who throws it off because he no longer needs it.

"Come with me, my son, and let us speak more fully of this matter, for indeed now that I scan your features, I perceive you to be a chosen vessel of the Lord, and we have much need of such here in this new land where Satan goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour."

CHAPTER XIV.

THE WAGER

“ ‘An asking,’ said he ho’^e gay,
‘An asking ye’ll rane me;’
Ask on, ask on,’ Sir Colvin said,
‘What may your asking be?’ ”

IN March General Oglethorpe, who had been for some months at Frederica, on St. Simons Island, strengthening his defences against the Spaniards, came northward to Savannah on his way to Charles Town, there to consult with the Assembly for a concerted action against the Spaniards at St. Augustine.

War had been declared between the crowns of Spain and England, and the molestations and mischiefs of the Spaniards in Florida, which continued secretly during all peace times, had become overt and menacing. The general had received a letter from the Crown, directing him to proceed to annoy the Spaniards actively; and weak as his Georgia colonists were, they desired to seek help from their wealthier and older neighbour to the north.

Oglethorpe was much beloved in Savannah. A historian of that time describes him as “in the prime of life, very handsome, tall and manly, dignified but not austere, . . . possessed of a liberal education, a

fearless soul, a determined will, an expansive energy, and a vast experience of men and climes and matters." His winning personality and his sterling worth made him a favourite. Much hospitality had been offered him, and Mistress Diana Chaters was bidden, with her uncle and young Lieutenant Marshall and Captain Quillian, to a dining given in his honour at Colonel Ashburnham's manor-house outside Savannah.

With many of these plantations there was easy and pleasant communication by water, and the trip to-day was to be made in a long periagua hewn from a mighty cypress log, which afforded ample room for the four persons she was to carry besides the four Indian rowers, who swung their paddles with the rhythmic exactness of machines, taking one long and one short stroke in the Yemassee fashion.

Diana was determined to appear her best; and to that end, putting sternly from her a natural repugnance, she opened, with bitten lip and frowning brow, the chest which contained those garments which should have been her wedding outfit when she thought to marry Archie Cameron. After considering every frock the chest contained, she chose out three and laid them upon her bed.

One was a yellow taffety, with the hue, and something the sheen, of honey, trimmed plentifully with creamy Flanders lace. Another, a soft green lute-string, with bands of white ribbon brocaded in sprigs of small red roses sewed upon it. This had also falls of lace; Irish points this time, and whiter than the lace upon the yellow frock. The one which pleased her fancy best, but which seemed a thought

too gorgeous for the occasion, was a brocade, white, with a flowering of yellow roses.

All three frocks were made with the narrow, pointed bodice, huge panniers, elbow sleeves, and square neck demanded by the fashion of the day. The full skirts were distended by a mighty hoop almost like a farthingale. So equal seemed the claims of the three upon her good-will, that she called in Agnes of Glasgow to help her decide.

The Scotchwoman looked them over in silence, held the bodices against the lithe, pliant, stately young form, to decide as to the becomingness of shade. "Why have you chosen green and yellow?" she asked, finally, with a little mournful half laugh.

"Because they both become me vastly," returned Diana.

"I like you best in the gown you oft wear about the house; and so I think does Lieutenant Marshall, who quoted, if you remember:

"Green's forsaken, yellow's forsworn;
Blue's the sweetest colour that's worn,"—

when you first appeared in it."

"Thank you," said Diana, "you have helped me to a decision — forsaken!" and she folded the green dress with unnecessary vigour. "I have a white frock here somewhere that will probably answer."

But when she came down the stair ready to embark in the canoe, she was dressed in a gown of lovely, silvery blue, with ruffles of filmy Venice lace at open neck and elbows; and in her powdered hair there was a bunch of the pink roses which grew at the doorway of Chaters House.

"I am indeed a green hand at this sort of thing,"

she murmured. "To think that I had not even the wit to ask his favourite colour and wear it, had not such an other-worldly personage as Agnes prompted me thereto!"

There was a great silken cloak of the peasant order, gathered at the neck, hanging from her shoulders and spreading over her hoop. Its pearly gray matched the hood with which she covered her curls and her roses, and the quilted lining was of white. There could be no doubt in any mind, as she met the young officer at the stair's foot, as to what was his favourite colour.

The gentlemen were of course in uniform. Sir Paris wore a suit of glistening murrey satin, but his waistcoat, reaching nearly to his knees, was a thing to muse upon, being garlanded with brocaded roses of crimson and yellow.

The two older men stepped before, young Marshall with a bow offered his hand, and the four walked down to the landing, where Mistress Diana's skill in settling that farthingale within the confines of the periagua was such as would be difficult for any modern damsel to attain.

Ashburnham house was a stately dwelling, sitting well back from the creek, and in the midst of extensive grounds. As they left their boat and crossed its lawn, upon which the grass was much less scanty than on most of the places about it, young Marshall called Diana's attention to the bowling-green on one side of the lawn, dropped a little below its level and shut off from it by a cassina hedge; and asked her if she would bowl with him later.

Captain Quillian lingered with Hastie, whom they met with General Oglethorpe at the landing, to

speak to some other newly come guests. The general and Sir Paris followed the young people across the lawn.

"I enjoy having Quillian in the house," Sir Paris began. "He brings me news of the court, and of matters quite unknown in this barbarous land. He tells me, Jamie, of Lord Hervey, whom everybody is calling 'Lord Fanny' now since Alex Pope, the spiteful little monkey, hath so lampooned him in the 'Dunciad.' 'Lord Fanny,' Quillian says, hath fifty wigs, and as many boxes to put them in, with labels of a varied shade for each, — a clever idea, think you not?"

"In the name of God! Paris, you are not regretting the court? You, a man who can stand erect here, and, barring reasonable loyalty, call no man his master."

"Steeped to the lips in poverty, as I am," Sir Paris allowed, "the court is truly not for me."

"Poverty!" exclaimed Oglethorpe. "Poverty is no sin."

"Nay, poverty is not a sin — but it is twice as bad," observed the other, tranquilly. "But listen, Jamie, about the wigs and boxes, which I do vow is a very clever plan. Quillian says, too, that my lord uses a different scent for kerchief, underlinen, and robe, so that he might know each from each in the dark."

"I hope to pass my days," Oglethorpe answered him, "in doing somewhat for humanity, and," with sudden heat, "my kerchiefs and robes may smell as Heaven wills. Even the ancient and fish-like odour of clothing worn for weeks on a forced march

will not be unwelcome, if so be by sniffing it I win immunity from the perfumes of a court."

"Man's days," began Sir Paris, regarding with narrowed eyes his long, white, fragile fingers, set tip to tip, "Man's days are as a bubble, Jamie. In a bubble there is a breath of air, and a drop of water. Yet it may mirror the universe, and hold a rainbow. Back there at the court, James, the bubble spins merrily, and gaudy darts on its frail sides whirl fantastically; and I think 'tis most sad for those who have no rainbow in the bubble."

"The pitiful smallness of mankind," Oglethorpe said, "is never more evident than at a court."

"Ah, small, yea, small, I grant you. Yet your own face looks back at you from the shining bubble of court life — small, as you say, Jamie, small — yet smiling, and with bright eyes; while here, a man of fashion and intelligence must perish every day and all day long."

"A court!" burst out Oglethorpe. "There needs must be a court, since men are to be governed; but God pity those who pass their days in them. I had rather serve my poor debtors here, and treat with my Indians, who will not lie to me, nor hold a smiling face above a drawn dagger, than to go back to your court, Paris, of which you are so fain."

The baronet smiled indulgently, as people do when their friends utter that which, upon the printed page, they would find inspiring and impressive. "Well, well," he sighed, "I could find things here more tolerable were it not for the loss of Junius."

"Is the fellow dead?" inquired Oglethorpe.

"Dead to me," returned Sir Paris, with a little rueful laugh. "He has acted upon those sugges-

tions of the Spanish which I endeavoured in vain to prevent your conveying to him. He is, in short, fled to the dons at Augustine, to colonel, I doubt not, that regiment of runaway blacks of which you so clearly informed him."

" 'Tis the danger you all live in, Paris. I would not have a slave about me — "

" No, nor let your friends have. So I see," said Sir Paris, with a wicked look. " It begins to appear likely that you gave my fleeing servitor (who, by the way, took a companion in the person of my niece's scullery maid) more aid and counsel than I would at first have suspected. If you are in close communication with him, and can easily do so, pray make him my compliments, and say to him that, for the taking away of the miserable Chunkey, I am almost minded to forgive him for depriving me of my own valued attendant, *videlicet*, himself."

The eighteenth century, the apogee of formalism in manners, produced very naturally many eccentrics, since to depart in the least from its painfully elaborate code was to range yourself, in the public eye, a rebel. Mistress Hastie Wynnewoode's vow, and similar mutilations of life, were not uncommon. Her case had many parallels in her own century, and several even in the next. The keeping of that vow rigidly, as she did, evinced her strength of will and character. But aside from it, she was very much as any other high-spirited, self-willed gentlewoman of her age.

When bidden to a dining at which General Oglethorpe was to be a guest, she did not lack for becoming wear proper to the occasion. She covered her short black locks as a man would, and as her mother

had done in her youth, with a monster wig done in puffs and rolls and curled tresses, of white horse-hair. Stately, austere, and of necessity silent, she was always held in more or less awe, particularly by the younger people. Now, as she stepped across the lawn with Captain Quillian, in the soft December sunshine which was like the spring-time of a northern land, she was a very handsome picture.

Colonel Ashburnham, a widower, stood with his daughter, Mistress Wanting Ashburnham, in the hall doorway to receive their guests, as was the hospitable colonial fashion.

The surroundings of Savannah were seventy years behind those of Charles Town. Ashburnham Manor-House, however, a commodious structure of Savannah brick, gained stateliness, as did Chaters House, from a great tappy wall which joined its façade and, with flanking walls of somewhat less height, extending down to the creek, shut in a very handsome lawn. There were many lacks in material convenience, but none in the elegance of the people. The plate was fine; the linen, service, and viands, beyond criticism. The stately furniture of the house stood out oddly against a certain rudeness of finish in the building itself; and the brocaded and powdered silken host and guests looked quaint enough when later, on the lawn, an Indian overseer came to make complaint of certain of his labourers, and brought the culprits with him.

It was a time of sharp and piquant contrasts, not the least of which was the graceful, stilted table talk which circulated about the board as Colonel Ashburnham, at its head, carved a monster wild turkey.

"I find myself forgetting Hector Chaters," Cap-

tain Quillian remarked to General Oglethorpe, who was near him at the table. "I think I should have known him; and yet, was he the man whose son — but no, he had no son; there is only the fair mistress," and he glanced down the long board to where Diana sat supreme in her beauty, making slender, pale little Mistress Wanting look like a tiny rush-light beside the moon.

"Yes, there were sons," Oglethorpe replied. "You probably never met Sir Hector. He came to Charles Town more than five and twenty years ago. The eldest children died in infancy, Paris tells me, of the complaints incident to a new country. Then came the twin boys of whom he was so proud; and after, little Phœbe, whom I well remember when they were visiting in England once, and who was a most sweet and gentle child, and died at six years of age. At the very last, appeared this vigorous and beautiful Diana, whom you know; and then lovely Polly Chaters died when her girl was yet an infant. The bringing up which the child must have had, could excuse much in her conduct — were there aught to excuse," he added, hastily.

"Why, yes," agreed Captain Quillian, "our young hostess, while a thought too imperious for my notion of what a maid should be, is certainly a daughter in whom any man might well feel pride."

"Pride!" echoed Oglethorpe; "'twas scarce the word for Hector, with his daughter. He brought her home when she was eight or nine — 'twas the year before he was lost at sea — and his adoration, his worship, promised easily her destruction. He told her frequently (and most injudiciously) that she was a queen. He gave her dominion over all

about her; she might even brave him, whom no other dared so much as criticise."

"A most unfortunate upbringing for a maid," commented Quillian, somewhat grimly. "I cannot think that one so trained would ever make a dutiful wife; unless, perchance, she met her match in a modern Petruchio. I would not be in Sir Paris's shoes under such circumstances; I well know that."

"Aye," answered Oglethorpe, "and 'twas one of the finest things I know of Paris Chaters, — and I know many good things of him, — the way in which he assumed the responsibility of his young niece and her estates. His sister-in-law was much attached to him. 'Twas her dowry laid the foundation for Sir Hector's fortunes, though he doubled it many times before his death. She and Hector both loved Paris, and either of them would have left provision for him; but both were called suddenly, — Hector went from his ship's deck, with his twin sons beside him; lads of sixteen they were, and noble boys, — so there was nothing left, in monies, to poor Paris."

"As to that," Captain Quillian smiled, "'tis often that a guardian, with no dishonesty, may make such use of a ward's estate as will line his own pockets."

"Not without what Paris Chaters would call dishonesty," objected the general. "A gentle, unworldly soul, and a conservative to the backbone, he nursed the estate, made no new ventures — out of which he might have taken private gain and none thought the worse of him except his own soul. He pushed out from his wonted habit, as I can see, to have all administered correctly; but he left his brother's plans untouched; and upon the day

of her majority (but a few months ago) he turned over every penny — very foolishly — to his niece. Owing to which method, he came by an empty pocket, and his niece has no conception of her obligation to him, thinking, as children ever do, that the goods of this world descend from heaven into waiting laps, gifts of the gods. She is generous by nature, — she would not be a Chaters otherwise. — yet this matter should be put before her. Paris owes it to himself to do so, and be no longer a pauper, pensioned upon her bounty; it is good for neither of them."

This conversation had taken place in intervals of the dining, and in guarded asides. Now Colonel Ashburnham, at the head of the table (the general as guest of honour sat upon his right hand) asked: "Gentlemen, have you tried my sauce? If not, pray do so in connection with the capons; though for myself, I consider it a universal sauce, and eat it with flesh, fish, and fowl," and he handed the dish to Oglethorpe.

"'Tis most excellent," said the general; and Captain Quillian, after making test of it, begged to know of what it was compounded.

"Why, that," the colonel said, "is what I wish to tell you. 'Tis a sauce famous in our family. My father had it from Carter, who, in his turn, got it from the Duke of York when he was concerned with marine matters, and the duke — I mean his most gracious Majesty Charles Second's brother — at the head of them. 'Tis made of dry toast beat in a mortar, together with some parsley, vinegar, salt, and a little pepper; to which my father — and I after him — have always added a lump of excel-

lent sweet butter. The duke was taught it by the Spanish ambassador, and in his time he mightily magnified it, Carter declared, thinking it improved every dish to which it was added."

Down from the walls smiled the Ashburnham ancestors, men and women in the quaint costumes of the Charleses, James First, and Elizabeth. Below, at the long table, sat and chatted, and ate and drank, the gaily dressed party who were the ancestors of many of the Georgians of to-day; and he who was most truly father of that colony was at the head of the board.

Hastie's method of communication had some advantages for a dinner-table. It was possible for her to write whatever she desired, and, handing it to her neighbour, address herself with contentment to her meal. At times so caustic and witty were these remarks, that the neighbour would pass the tablet on. Perhaps it would go down the length of the dinner-table a wake of laughter followed it, while she ate unmoved, unnoticing.

"By the Lord!" Colonel Ashburnham commented to the general, "'tis not so bad a plan neither — for a woman. Methinks a man might have peace with a wife like that. When he chose to know her mind, he could read; when he elected otherwise, he could forbear. Aye, 'tis not without advantages," and he cast a widower's appraising glance at the unconscious, irresponsive Hastie.

After dinner, the ladies sat upon seats arranged beside the bowling-green, the gentlemen attendant upon them, to see Robert and Diana play their game of bowls.

The costume of the time, with its fearfully con-

stricting bodice, impeding hoops and panniers, and overelaborate coiffure, was very ill-suited to any exercise whatever. But Diana Chaters was one of the few women whose pride of bodily perfection could rise superior to any dress. Conscious of the supreme beauty of her hands and arms, the grace of her tall, pliant figure, and that the bowls gave ample opportunity for the display of these advantages, she managed, though Heaven knows how, to bowl, and to bowl well, in her formal dinner dress.

"If I lose," said Diana, pausing with bowl in air, "I will make you a pudding with my own hand."

"And if he lost, Mistress Chaters, sure 'tis forfeit enough," cried a laughing voice from the group of young people at the seats, "that he be made to eat that pudding — yea, every spoonful!"

"Nay," retorted Diana, flinging back the laugh, "there is no man need be made to eat pudding of my making for a forfeit."

"I warrant me 'twould be sweet," cried one of the men, "if you put those finger-tips in it."

"Yes," added the young hostess, smiling archly, "but she might spoil it with ginger."

"One can put up with a vast deal of ginger, for a like quantity of sugar and honey," said Captain Quillian, philosophically; "though as far as the disposition of my hostess is concerned — I take it that is the thing to which you people are alluding — 'tis all compounded of the latter ingredients, in my belief."

"Well, then," asked Diana, poisoning her bowl for a cast, "what do you put up against the pudding I shall make for you? I don't care for the things one may get here in Savannah. Wager me some-

thing you brought with you from Virginia, a picture of your sweetheart, for instance."

"Something I brought with me from Virginia?" echoed Robert; "why, I carried nothing of value save the little silver cup at which you laughed, Mistress Diana, and which is an offering quite unworthy of you."

"I'll be bound there's another thing — if he left it not behind, in the keeping of some fair Virginian," cried Mistress Burlingame, a portly, handsome widow, who, it was rumoured, had had within one month of her widowing ten chances to change her state — "I warrant me there's something for which, if 'tis whole and not promised away, any maid would be glad to play at bowls, and do her best to win it."

"His heart, eh?" laughed the host, jovially. "I have heard of games of chance played for brides; but this is the first time I ever heard it suggested that a maid should play for a husband — that was your meaning, was it not, Mistress Burlingame?"

"Surely," returned the lady, gaily. "And were I ten years younger, and not already —"

"Bespoke," cut in one of the young men.

"Well, already bespoke, then," laughed the widow. ("I had intended to say already gray, but 'twill answer.") "Were I not already bespoke, I would play at bowls for such a pretty husband that."

This talk had been in lowered tones, and the words scarcely reached Diana and Robert, who were once more speaking together. "If you refuse to put up the little cup," the girl challenged him, "I shall think 'tis a love gift from some sweet boy."

"No," protested the young lieutenant, "tis a love gift in our family from a man's first sweetheart, his mother. Three generations of us have drunk our nap from it, and cut our teeth upon it. You may see the marks of them around the rim, and the names upon the sides."

Diana became suddenly grave. "O, since it is a piece of family silver, something you hand down from father to son, we will say no more about it, but I will play you for any forfeit you choose to put up."

"The cup or nothing," Marshall answered; "I only remember, however, I cannot give it away. It goes back to my son. You must have his name put on it beneath mine on the shield, and give it him for a christening gift. Think you such a privilege worth playing for?"

"I do," said Diana; but both young faces were terribly pale as the game began. Diana won, and (apparently) without Robert's intentionally giving her the game.

Other guests began to come in toward evening, and after the candles were lit there was a dance. Rather to Diana's surprise though not at all to her dissatisfaction, Robert Marshall cut a most brilliant figure in this part of the entertainment. It was not alone his fine stature, his beauty and charm. These brought him (in a new community, too, where ladies were in the minority) the pick of the maids. But the open adulation of him by the older women, in which the jovial Mistress Burlingame still led, and the special favour shown him by the men—of all ages—gave him a unique position akin to beliehood.

Diana sat that night long after the sleepy Juno had gone to bed — or to the pallet outside her mistress's door where she slept — vastly pleased with herself, her plans, the dance, and the impression that Lieutenant Marshall had made upon all there present. It was worth while to carry off the most admired beau of the whole circle.

The silver porringer was in her hand as she sat. Directly on their arrival home, Robert, petitioning her to wait, had run up to his room, and, in a very few moments, brought it to her. She was a little surprised that he had presented it with scarcely a word, and with such profusion of blushes and tremors.

But these were explained as the combined embarrassment of both lover and author when, later, her investigating fingers brought out from its interior a little curled paper, on which, in ink scarce dry, was written (Robert had been unable, after all, to achieve a posy) :

“Like the rim of this cup
Love hath no end.
Lay thy lips to it
And have thy fill.”

CHAPTER XV.

THE TENDER MERCIES OF THE WICKED

"MARRY me yersel', Jamie,
Be my gudemon yersel', laddie;
An' tak' me tae your ain countrie,
Wi' you at hame to dwell, laddie."

IT was barely a week after the dinner and dance at Ashburnham Manor-House, that Mistress Wanting Ashburnham married young McIvor, to whom orders came unexpectedly to join the company at Darien. Oglethorpe was gone down with his detachment. Henceforth he was to see little of Savannah. His place was near the enemy, — his home upon the waters and in the forts which guarded the southern confines of the province. Robert had been upon two recruiting trips westward to the Creeks and Uchees, and now looked almost momentarily for orders to bring his Indians to the front.

The two young people were discussing the recent hasty marriage. "'Twas as sad as a funeral," Marshall said. He had been groomsman to young McIvor.

"There I disagree with you," Diana replied. "You men who can go to the front and fight, have no mercy on us poor women, who must sit at home and eat our hearts out. You are not willing that

we should give anything for our country. For my part, I hold her to be very blessed. Her father is too old to go to the wars. Him she may not arm and speed to her country's defence, nor follow with her prayers. But now she hath an arm to strike for her in the fray — ”

“ He was a selfish fellow,” Marshall interrupted. “ Like enough Mistress Wanting was so taken up with these patriotic feelings of which you speak that she had no time to consider the man himself; and when he comes back home lacking an arm or leg, and not at all beautified by the hardships of a camp in the swamps, she will be sorry that ever she took him. For my part, I should dread making such a bargain — and the more I loved a woman the more would I dread it,” significantly.

“ Love!” flouted Diana. “ Much you know of love, sir, to couple dread with it. Love is boldness itself, and fears not to claim its own, wherever met or however come by.”

Robert caught his breath, and after a little pause of evident hesitation at the utterance he was about to risk, asked, “ Mistress Diana, if you loved a man at all, and he showed so selfish and encroaching a spirit, would you not decide that you had wasted your affection?”

“ No,” returned Diana, “ and if I would, we cannot choose whom we will love. Faith, I wish Captain Quillian were not wed; I would go and lay siege to him and bind my colours on his helm. Then should I feel that I had a stake in this war. Then I think the general would let me go down to St. Simons.”

“ Why, if you will make a poor match in haste,”

Marshall said, smiling, yet with deep vibration in his voice, "if you will make so rash a bargain for the sake of going to the front in war-times, there is one nearer who is not wed, and who is —"

He broke off, turned and looked at her with a gaze so full and ardent that her own eyes fell before it. Then, dropping lightly on one knee before her, he took the hand that held the bunch of Bonny Dame, and went on:

"O, Diana, I know I should not say these things to you — not now. I had hoped, in a happier time, to woo you as you should be wooed. But, dearest love, when I think of that which is before me, and realise the many chances that all of us have of leaving our bones in those wildernesses whither we go, I cannot say — I cannot tell you, dear — how sweet 'twould be to have you — mine before I go, to know there was a wife waiting for me."

Diana sat turned almost away from him, shaken by an emotion so acute, so painful, that it locked her lips.

"I am very selfish," the boy whispered. "You were jesting in what you said before. He who leaves a wife behind him when he goes to wars, may be leaving a widow as well." He raised the flower-laden hand to his lips, and Diana turned swiftly and put the other hand upon his shoulder.

"Nay," she finally articulated, "you and I are of one mind. You are not selfish. I should never blame you with it. I —"

She rose swiftly, Marshall also. "Come," she whispered, "let us tell them." And before the astonished lieutenant had quite fathomed her intention, they had stepped to the window, and speaking to

the card-players within, Diana announced, "Here is a piece of news for you: Lieutenant Marshall has decided to take him a wife before he goes down to St. Simons, even as young Captain McIvor did."

"Why, who —" began Captain Quillian, and then burst out laughing, for the two young people standing hand in hand answered his question so pat. "Well, well, well!" he cried, springing up, catching a hand of each, and shaking it heartily, "he's a lucky dog, a lucky dog."

Marshall turned swiftly to Sir Paris. "I beg you will not think, sir," he entreated, "that I feel independent of your consent in this matter. I trust to have it, and your blessing."

Distress showed itself in the baronet's face. He would evidently have pleaded delay, yet the look on his niece's countenance was not propitious for quibbling. "I hope," he began, "that there will be nothing decided, or at least no wedding, till James Oglethorpe comes up. He is likely to be here thrice before Lieutenant Marshall is moved."

"And may come not at all before that date," Marshall urged. And all debatement passed — under Diana's compelling eyes — into congratulation and rejoicing.

After this evening, upon which Robert may have been said to ask definitely for Diana, and to feel himself her promised husband, she assumed toward him a different manner. Her demeanour showed an odd, indefinite shyness of him which, in a sense, pleased him greatly. For though he would not have admitted it to himself, the openness with which she had shown her love had hurt him. Her manner was now much more nearly in consonance with his

ideal of what a high-bred young woman's demeanour should be.

Being promised this charming girl for a wife, his natural ardour led him to urge that if the marriage were to be before his departure for the front at all, it should be at once. He was infinitely charmed with the sweet and maidenly way in which his betrothed put aside these overtures. She displayed no less affection for him, she promised most seriously and sweetly that she would marry him before his departure. She even set Agnes to work upon some pieces of wonderful white India muslins which might be made to serve for a wedding-gown; yet an approach to more exact naming of the day brought blushes and tremulous, frightened denials.

The young man's judgment was, in point of fact, arrayed against this sudden marriage; but this bearing of Diana's proved very fascinating to him, and put him more strongly in the attitude of suitor. He did not importune her; he did not ordinarily urge a speedy marriage upon her; yet the understanding between them now was that he desired it above all things, and that she was hesitating, presumably through maiden shyness.

The crux of the matter had in truth been reached: A name, a sword to strike for her, she conceived that she desired; a husband in fact and a young self-willed, dominating one, with a very pretty idea of his own rights and deserts, she was not willing to accept. How to come by one and avoid the other was the problem which kept her awake o' nights and painted dusky circles under her gray eyes.

Mistress Hastie Wynnewoode came to Chaters House, at this time, to pay a visit of some days.

Robert, who had been given by Sir Paris a somewhat highly coloured account of Hastie's love-affair and its strange effect upon her life, was convinced that in this action of hers he saw all the tenderness and sentiment which the baronet insisted were beneath her rugged exterior. He was charmed — now that he came to know her — with her force, her fine abilities. But most of all (being a man, and a young, credulous, and romantic one, very masculine in his ideals) was he charmed with her constancy to the lover whom she believed herself to have wronged.

After a somewhat laborious conversation with Hastie, he expressed this admiration to Diana, as he was bidding her good night. "I did not at first see, dearest," he observed, "in this cousin of yours, the beauty and sweetness which she now shows me. She is indeed worthy to be related to the fairest and most charming of her sex. As with your own dear self, love is all with her. It is life itself. Like the maids in ballads and in the verses of poets, the women of your blood love like goddesses."

In the dusk of the hall, Diana turned away from him, and smiled a very bitter little smile. "Why, yes," she said, "like goddesses, perhaps. But you remember that my namesake in the hierarchy was very cold, and impervious to the arrows of love."

"Ah," whispered Marshall softly, as he bent his tall head for the permitted good-night kiss, "you have forgotten that she stooped from heaven — just as you have done, dearest — to a mere mortal. 'Tis not that such natures love all comers; but when they love at all, it is with constancy and devotion that shames the rest of us."

Diana laughed as she ran up the stairs, stopped midway of them, leaned saucily down, and called softly over the balustrade: "The fellow this first Diana loved was a sad sleepyhead, and scarce knew what he was about, so much did the goddess befool him. Have a care for yourself, Lieutenant Endymion!"

CHAPTER XVI.

THE CUP OF TREMBLING

"LORD THOMAS said a word in jest,
Fair Annet took it cruel;
'A'! I will nevir wed a wife
Who speaks me sae — upo' my life —
A'tho' she were a jewel.'"

THE night was so warm, though the month was January, that Diana set her chamber window open. She lay listening to the diminishing sounds, as the household grew quiet for the night. A desperate wakefulness had laid its grip upon her — she seemed to herself to be waiting for some message or event; and when she heard a horse come trotting up the street she rose in a sort of panic, threw a dark robe over her night-gown, and flew to the hall window where she could watch the horseman. But the fellow, a belated trooper, passed by, and broke into a bit of rollicking tavern catch as he vanished up the street.

She went back with a sigh of something like relief to a seat beside her open casement which overlooked the dusky lawn and garden. Here she fell to brooding; it was as though one had waked her and bade her think on her present situation. A loathing of what she had done, and a fear of that which she had planned to do, possessed her. Rob-

ert's face, adoring, laughing, boyish, swam before her. What should she apprehend from a light-hearted lad who was utterly her slave? Why should she, where her plans touched him, figure to herself confusion? Why was not he the very man to be shifted about as a pawn by her superior intellect and force?

She found in her unquiet mind no satisfactory answer to these questionings; and that subconsciousness which had awakened her continued so alert that, at the first lisp of a paddle in the creek at the lawn's foot, she sprang to her feet and was down at the house door tugging back the heavy bolts before she paused to reflect or question.

A moment she stood, all alone in the dark, silent, sleeping house, wondering at herself; then she pushed open the portal and fled with light, silent steps down the walk, to meet half-way an Indian courier, as noiseless footed, with a packet which he said contained a letter for Lieutenant Marshall and one for Mistress Diana Chaters — both from General Oglethorpe.

"Is it urgent? Shall I wake him?" she whispered to the messenger, who was none other than Umpechee, Oglethorpe's friend, who with Tooanaghoni, accompanied him to Europe.

He bowed gravely in answer to Diana's question, and turned away, saying, "There is great haste, or the general had not suffered Umpechee to come. Also, I have been delayed. You should waken him at once."

Back in her own room, Diana lit a candle at carefully uncovered coals upon the broad hearth. Then, with fingers that trembled terribly, she opened the

packet, scanned the two letters, which were exactly alike, unsealed and read her own. It was a brief, concise message from the general, stating that she was now called upon for those monies which were to provide corn that the overland reinforcements of Indians might be fed upon their way down. Lieutenant Marshall, he added, was being notified by this same courier to go at once with stores to Fort Augusta, where the entire band would rendezvous for the trip. There being no provision for their maintenance while encamped there, it was necessary that the lieutenant meet them, preferable, perhaps, that he be on the ground before the Indians should arrive. And the date of the rendezvous was this day!

Oglethorpe, bearing in mind to treat the girl as a respected friend and ally, had given her information that was complete and direct. With the receipt of his letter, she doubted not that Marshall would bid her an immediate farewell and set off up the river — promising what? Promising to wed her when the war was over (supposing, of course, that his fancy should last so long, and he return unharmed). Meantime she had visions of Archibald Cameron coming to Savannah to taunt and belittle her; going with the South Carolinians to St. Simons to spread abroad the story of her jilting.

Nay, it was now — it must be now — her plans were exactly as they should be. Why, Hastie was in the house, even; she had come up for her first visit to them; it was prearranged by Providence. She would find some way, before she gave him his packet, to let Marshall know that she was for a speedy marriage.

Waking all night with anxiety and emotion, she slept late in the morning. When she went down, breakfast was over and Marshall gone. She had no possible reason to send for him except that very urgent cause, the letter. And the letter she was determined not to give him till it would serve her purpose. So she passed a day of torture, till evening brought Marshall, tired and dusty from a day's hard work at the gathering and storing of provisions. After dinner, she was impatient of all the company, and strangely unlike herself. She finally drew Marshall away to sit just outside the window, very silent in the expressed expectation that they might hear the mocking-bird sing that song which is his very own, and which he reserves for mellow, moonlight nights. It was too early for such a hope, being barely turned into February, but the girl claimed to have heard this elfin warbling the night before.

As one by one the good-nights came through the window to the young people and were replied to, Diana began to talk to her lover. Finally, Agnes MacBain moving impatiently about in the room within, Diana leaned through the casement and said, sweetly: "Agnes, we have somewhat of importance to discuss, Lieutenant Marshall and I. Go then; do not wait for me; I shall be up directly." And so they were alone together.

"What is it, dearest?" inquired the young lieutenant, fondly, "the choosing of a new frock — or the livery of a new servant?"

Diana resented the light tone. She had hoped he would ask if it was their marriage which was

to be discussed. "No," she answered, sharply, "if you do not care to hear, I will not speak at all."

"I? I not care to hear?" returned Marshall, half angrily. "Why, Diana, you are unlike yourself."

"Say at once, sir," Diana urged, "that I am beside myself to dare offend you thus."

"Beside yourself," Marshall began, laughing, with a quick veering to his usual good humour, "surely you are, sweetheart," and would have added, "for you are beside me," but she was on her feet in an instant. Her racked nerves had given way.

"How dare you —" she blazed out.

"Diana — Diana — wait, hear me," interposed the boy, shocked, astounded. But she brushed him furiously aside with —

"How dare you speak so to — to a lady whom you —" she floundered, then came charging out with, "I scorn a man who would speak so to — any lady. I scorn you!"

Robert, consciously innocent of all offence, was at his patience's end.

"You scorn me, Diana? Is it so?" The query came back instantly; but there followed it in a voice of hot resentment, "If for something that I have not done, — a fancied and most improbable affront, — you do really scorn me, then surely there can be no thought of wedding between us two."

Diana stood apart from him, head down, hands clenched, fighting her battle. She had never in her life shown so much courtesy and kindness to those about her as during her courtship of young Robert Marshall; she had never been even partially civil for so long a time together as the instinctively gauged needs of this emprise had forced her to be;

and the combination left her bloated with insults, and greedy of an auditor for them—or so she thought.

Her courtship, brief as it was, had seen whole hecatombs piled secretly before that overblown pride and insolence of hers, raging at the checks she must needs put upon it. And now his words were as the kindling spark. She looked at him. The haughty mouth was set so that no dimples indented the cheek. His face was flushed like an angry child's, his eyes flaming with a rage to match her own, ill held in leash by the memory that he was a gentleman, and addressing a lady. That hot temper of his, which was not easily stirred, and most easily pacified by any candour of an opponent, bid fair to part them.

As she gazed, a chilling fear fell upon Diana's boiling mood. What was this thing which she was doing? Throwing away her hard-fought-for chance of a man's name to wear, and an arm to strike for her. What was it she was risking? A *second* jilting!

At the realisation—as the conviction came home to her that this young man with the pink face and the blazing eyes was capable of jilting her, Diana Chaters, if she drove him too far—a great shuddering took her.

Once more she stood in spirit, naked to the gaze of her enemies, and bore on her unveiled face the jeering scorn of hundreds. Not that! Never that! She would abase herself; she would crawl, if need were, to placate him.

Before she had quite decided what form her abasement should take, she had whirled about, run to

him, and flung herself upon his breast, clutching the lapels of his coat, crying out, "Forgive me! I did not mean it! I was mad to say that. Oh, do not leave me! Forgive — forgive — forgive!"

The outburst was too nearly akin to madness, or mortal sickness, to carry much flattery to Marshall's mind. With a face of sudden concern, he reached up, took her frantically struggling hands, unclasped them from his coat collar, and laid them about his neck, that he might the more handily support her tall, shaking form.

"What is it, dearest love?" he questioned, with remorseful tenderness. "What can I have done that put you about so?"

It would be untrue to say that Diana, lying spent upon his breast, did not know, at the clasping of his strong, loving arms about her, the first moment of real happiness, or even peace, which had been hers since she had met Archibald Cameron.

"What is it, heart's treasure?" whispered her penitent lover. "Do I fright you with my uncouth tongue? Would you rather be absolved of your rash vow? No — no — no — love," for her hands were locking themselves together in anguish, and she was sobbing miserably — "be not afraid. Tell me what you would have, and indeed — indeed, I will do it."

Diana fancied she could read the signs of renunciation in those words. He was about to break his promise — and break it saying he did so for her sake.

Crazed at the thought, realising in a brief glimpse what her loss were if he did so, she turned her face and covered his fair brow, cheek and neck, the lacy

ruffles of his tie, with wild kisses, whispering, "You will forgive me — you do love me? O Robert — *my darling!*"

The unexpected caress, and the still more unexpected words, left Marshall utterly happy and completely abashed. Half-lifting, half-leading the hysterical young creature, he drew her into the room, and would have placed her upon the settle by the fire and seated himself beside her. But she slipped from his arms to the floor, crouching, clasping his knees, crying out, "Do not leave me! Oh, do not leave me! Oh, Robert — Robert — Robert — do not desert me! Promise that you will never do that!"

Distressed, horrified, Marshall bent to raise her. "I do, dear heart — whatever the promise be," he deprecated. And then his evil fate counselled him to add, "Even if it be to give thee up — I could promise it, to pleasure thee."

At the words, she went wildly on, "No, no! I will never rise till you promise me — oh — oh — oh, promise, promise!"

Robert made haste to offer all those tender assurances of unaltered and unalterable devotion which he now realised she desired to hear. He quieted her with that instinctive skill, that subjective knowledge which some childless women display in regard to babies, and some inexperienced men show concerning hysterical women. She leaned her head against his shoulder, and spoke with closed eyes. "I shall not sleep this night for anxiety lest wisdom find you, in the long hours of darkness, and counsel you to change your mind and break your promise to so hateful, so unwomanly a creature."

Marshall laughed softly. "And I shall not close my eyes for pure bliss to think that I may keep that vow; and for dreaming over what you have — what you have said to me this night. Why, love, when a goddess stoops from heaven to a hind, does the yokel run away?"

"I think he usually does," murmured Diana, wearily; "but I am no goddess and you no hind. I shall not sleep for bitter uncertainty."

"You would sleep here," suggested her lover, timidly. "Rest so, dear love," he went on, in tones of deep tenderness. "We will keep vigil awhile together, or I will watch over thee."

And it was so that the few hours till early dawn were passed by this strangely met, strangely assorted young pair.

Diana, exhausted by her emotion, slumbered fitfully, waked, clutched her lover's arm, sighed, and fell again on sleep.

He, smiling down upon her with the adoring passion a mother lavishes upon her babe, passed between that time and dawn some hours of the most exquisite happiness ever given to a human breast. If arm or shoulder ached from its cramped position, he could not know; his soul was away, floating in that elysium open to those who love and serve.

When the east was reddening, Diana waked and set a sombre gaze upon it.

"See, love," whispered Marshall, "the morn."

Poor Diana had hoped that this might be her wedding-day; yet she had watched her wedding-morning dawn once before, and the recollection of that morning clouded this.

They stood together, hand in hand, while the

great sun rose. Presently Marshall's big voice spoke. "I bless this day," he said. "What was't the old fortune-teller gave me to my lot? That I should have my heart's desire?"

Diana regarded him heavily. "Poor soul!" she whispered, almost under her breath; "your heart's desire. Yes, and he promised happiness therewith; and 'tis my thought, that if *I* am that heart's desire no happiness can come with the possession."

"My sweetheart is tired and overwrought. I care not for prophecies. I am the happiest man on earth. It still seems strange to me that you should stoop, like your namesake, to an earthborn lover; but you have shown me so nobly and generously the treasures of your heart that my incredulous rapture is calmed in happy security."

"Security! With me!" echoed Diana. "Oh, 'tis too pitiful! Be wise, Robert Marshall; turn back from this marriage, while you may. You shall do so without blame. I—we will say that we have quarrelled, a conclusion readily believed by my family, at least." She finished with a little hard laugh.

Robert dropped her hands and stepped back from her. The colour died swiftly out of his flushed face, the light from his happy eyes.

"Diana," he uttered, in a sort of heart-broken undertone, "do you wish this? Is it that your heart is engaged elsewhere? that you do not desire the marriage which was to be?"

He made no movement to touch her. He stood apart and looked at her sternly. He spoke of the marriage not as a certainty, but as debatable. Had he been counselled by one who knew all the circum-

stances, and the character of Diana Chaters thoroughly, had he been advised of that hidden letter in her breast, and the use she proposed making of it, he could not have pursued a course more certain to make an end of her half-hearted protests.

"God knows," she said, bitterly, "my heart belongs to no man." And added, slowly, and after a pause during which his clear, wondering eyes dwelt strongly upon her, "Save you."

The next moment, though it was not yet light, the boy's quick ear caught sounds of the servants stirring in the distant quarter where they slept. "Come, sweetheart," he murmured, "all doubts and fears should vanish with the night. They must have no place in the days which still find us together."

At the stair-foot he kissed her, and watched her as she went slowly and sighingly up to her chamber, stopping often, but never turning to look back.

"Poor child — poor motherless maid," he murmured, under his breath, unmindful that himself had been motherless since infancy, and was less than a year her senior. And so ignorant was he of women and their ways, that he was able to believe all this strange behaviour of Diana's but the fitful moods of a young damsel at such a time. And he went out with Heaven knows what innocent, boyish vanity swelling great within him that this beautiful and imperial young creature should so adore him.

As Diana entered her still, shadowed room, a white shape rose up from the further end of it and fled toward her with a low cry.

"At last you are come!" whispered Agnes of Glasgow.

"Why, what are you doing here, Agnes?" inquired Diana, not unkindly. Her own mood made her pitiful to the distress she saw in the other's face.

"Ah, if you but knew what I have suffered!" Agnes went on, in a low, choking voice. "I came but to call you. I — Then, when I found your bed had not been slept in, I went down to the creek."

"To the creek!" cried Diana, pushing her gently back and staring in her face. "Agnes, Agnes, are you distraught, frenzied?"

"I half believe I am," the woman replied, with a pitiful attempt at a smile. "But, Mistress Diana, I looked in the pool under the willows, and when there was something white there, my heart stopped beating, and I stood trembling and fearing to find what it was, until the moon shifting showed that 'twas but a flax upon the water."

"Did you think I had incontinently drowned myself?" in a slightly sarcastic tone. "And why, pray, should I do so? I, with my wedding-day — nearing."

"Oh, my poor child, my poor child!" quavered Agnes. "I know your heart, your poor broken heart, cannot be in this marriage."

"Mistress MacBarr," cried Diana, drawing back, "you go too far. Do you hint that I care — that I ever cared — for that bound Cameron? Why, he is not fit to burnish Robert Marshall's sword. Nay, he is not fit to clean the mud from Robert Marshall's boots." And as, in her pride, she said this thing, Diana, for one fleeting moment, knew, felt, that it was true.

"Forgive me," begged Agnes, once more very

humbly. "This wedding seems to me so hasty on your part, and I — knowing as I do —"

"Knowing what, Mistress MacBain? Some people know too much."

"I speak very freely," Agnes went on, hesitatingly, "because I am shaken and in distress by you; and such a man as Archibald Cameron was — as you tell me he was — is not easily forgotten."

"That he is not!" returned Diana bitterly, and her gloom once more settled down upon her. "He is not easily forgotten — and he shall not be forgot. There comes a reckoning between Archibald Cameron and me; and I see it very close now. But he shall not come into this day — of all days, Agnes. Let us speak no more of him. Come, help me lay out my dress. Do you wake Juno and send her to brush my hair. Let her first go down and lay a kerchief on the lawn, to bring me dew upon it for my face. I must look my fairest to-day, Mistress MacBain — I have a reason. This is not a simple Sabbath."

And Agnes, with backward glancing face, went out to do her mistress's biddings.

CHAPTER XVII.

FOR BETTER OR FOR WORSE

"O FAREWELL griefe, and welcome joye,
(Sing, put by the willow, the garland of willow.)
For now I have wedded mine own true love,
(And I's never more weare willow.)"

DESPITE the dew which Juno might have carried to her on the napkin, it was a ghastly, driven, harried face poor Diana bore when she came down-stairs attired for church.

Marshall's letter was still in her bosom. She dared not lay it down; she dared not deliver it; she scarce dared think at all of it. It was an example of her cruel pride and her fierce courage to hold it back for her own plans; for she was deeply concerned in this war, and aware that the lives of hundreds — potentially the lives of the colonies themselves — were taken into her impious hands, and that this unworthy trifling was imperilling all.

In the coach, on their way to church, she began speaking again of last night's conversation, whispering — Robert in swift asides and allusions; but the time was not propitious: there were others by.

Once at the court-house, which served also as a chapel, she went through the service, rising up, sitting down, kneeling, rising again, repeating the

words of the litany and giving the responses with who shall say what wild emotions tearing at her heart-strings.

She looked at Hastie beside her. Hastie, calm, resolute, ordering her life as pleased her. She glanced past at the waxen cheek and ear, the fragile profile of her uncle, clear and fine — and powerless. Beyond, was Marshall's glowing face, tempered to a conventional calm because of the sacred place it was in, the shining eyes prone to seek hers. Outside was Quillian, heavy and demure, making his responses in a tone which might have served for the whole party.

Services over, the little group passed out. In the doorway they met with Agnes, who did not ordinarily go or come with them.

The four elders stepped ahead; the lovers dropped back. In the porch, in a moment of comparative seclusion, Marshall caught Diana's hand, sheltered by the folds of her great cloak. "What is it, sweetheart? Have the old fears returned with the daylight?"

"Yes, Robert," she answered steadily. "I wish that this were indeed our wedding-day; that we had been wedded back there, and that we were stepping forth man and wife."

"'Tis swiftly done," murmured Marshall, catching sudden fire from her words. He bent over her, his eyes glowing, his fair face flushing crimson, "O Diana, beloved, if you be in serious earnest, 'tis swiftly done!"

The party for Chaters House had paused at the coach. Agnes, Sir Paris, and Hastie were evidently expected to go in it with Diana, and Quillian looked

back to see if Marshall was coming to walk with him. As Robert caught the glance, he threw up a hand and beckoned the party. Something in the imperious motion brought them all quickly. Most of the worshippers were gone from the church.

"We have decided," the boy began, hurriedly, "to be married this morning. I beg your pardon, sir, I understood that your permission included even so hasty a wedding as this," he added, deprecatingly, to Sir Paris. "We catch this time, madam," turning to Hastie, "when you are with us to honour the occasion. 'Twas but this instant thought upon, or we had told you earlier. I beg you to remain here one moment while I go and prepare the minister."

Quillian looked after him with a curious, indulgent smile. "Bless the lad," he said, "he should have left that for the groomsmen to do—I suppose I am groomsmen." And they all laughed a little awkwardly.

Marshall had hurried down the aisle almost running, stopped an acquaintance or two, returned them to their pews, and finally found the minister in the vestry—improvised from a small jury-room—putting off his robes, told him to resume them, and had him in readiness by the time he had gotten back and notified the party at the door. Then Quillian put himself forward as groomsmen, Sir Paris offered his arm to the bride, Robert conducted Hastie, and, Agnes slipping stealthily in the rear with wide, horrified eyes, the marriage party went again into the church.

Such a wedding was not so strange in the Georgia of those troubled days of wars and alarms as it seemed to this poor girl who knew too much of its

inner history. Ere Diana had started up the aisle, she turned aside, threw off her long gray cloak and silken hood, handed them to Agnes, and Hastie observed with a sarcastic smile that, however recent Lieutenant Marshall's decision might be, the bride had certainly dressed herself for the occasion, for she emerged, a beautiful vision in delicate brocade and taffeta and lace, her dark hair and snowy neck gleaming with pearls.

When the knot had been tied, and Sir Paris conceived that the matter was settled to Diana's satisfaction, he heaved a mighty sigh of relief; and when his turn came to offer congratulation, did so with more unction than another.

Then once more the walk down to the coach, this time Diana on her husband's arm, Hastie and Sir Paris following them, Agnes and Captain Quillian bringing up the rear. The four members of the family got into the coach, the two others followed afoot. Hastie drew out her tablets. Her pity for Robert Marshall was as deep as her distrust of her cousin's daughter and the motives of this match.

"I wish you all happiness, my young cousin," she wrote, and passed it to the bridegroom; "and if you do not receive it, here is one who thinks 'twill not be because 'tis not deserved."

Diana sat with her eyes fixed before her. The letter which was to send this new-made husband of hers in headlong haste to the Indians and the wars rose and fell above her troubled heart. She shrank with both fear and distaste from the thing which she had yet to do. The letter must seem to have been delayed. But how? Where? Chance would offer her some plan, perhaps. The fact being

now irrevocable, the thing accomplished, she realised that all her future happiness must depend upon — as all her present comfort came from — the man at her side, a handsome, inexperienced, open-hearted boy. At times, it seemed to her that she would rather be free to put her head down on his breast as it had lain last night, to sob out her wretched tale and have him unravel it somehow for her, than anything which earth could offer. She had had some glimpse of his strength and manly directness; she could fancy how troubles such as hers would evaporate in the sun of his frankness; but he, of all people, must be kept outside her counsels just now; he, more than any other, must be deceived. She had admitted to herself that any hope of happiness she had must be in him, and yet she stood pledged to strike him, and strike at once, and follow a course thereafter which must destroy all ground for mutual happiness between them.

Robert was fain to modify his bliss and behave seemly; yet the suddenness of the thing had flown to his head like wine. He could not refrain from trying continually to catch his bride's eye or to touch her hand. Indeed, such small breaches of the rigid etiquette of the time seemed very little to the impulsive boy who longed to have his beautiful, imperial, distraught darling in his arms, her head on his breast, that he might once for all calm her disquiet, annihilate all her fears. And these preoccupations made his answers seem so random and ill-considered as to cause smiles upon the part of the hearers.

When they arrived at home, Diana, cold and trembling, drew the letter from her bosom and held it ready in her hand. Hastie and Sir Paris went in



ahead of them, the latter desiring to announce to the servants of the household the marriage of their young mistress. As the elders stood at the house door, they heard a cry. Diana was looking back at a white object which she had apparently turned over with her skirts.

"What is it?" she uttered, in a strained, unnatural voice. "'Tis a letter, Robert. Oh, I am sure it is for you!"

Marshall bent, picked up the letter, recognised the handwriting, and though his face was pale, bowed formally to his wife, and saying, "By your permission, madam," opened it. Something sinister in the appearing of this missive seemed to presage its contents.

With one devouring glance Robert was master of its central fact. "Why, how is this?" he cried. "I should have gone yesterday — nay, the day before yesterday!" And then remembered himself, and presented his hand to lead his new-made wife into her house.

Of all the babbling group which came about him at the disturbance, Hastie alone (being silent) had leisure to note that the paper Marshall held in his hand was dry. It had not been exposed to the dew of night, nor even of early morning. It had not, indeed, lain by the pathside when they went to church. Surely poor Diana's ruse was a clumsy one.

The bride finally went from the hallway into the parlours, seated herself before a window with bent head, and looked out with unseeing eyes. She heard Quillian, summoned from above, come rattling down the stairs two at a time, crying, "How's

this? How much ammunition must I have ready? How is it that your message was delayed? God's blood, man! this means much to the colony and to the general. We must stir ourselves. Oh, poor girl — I had forgot!" and he wheeled and glanced toward the parlour.

At his "Oh, poor girl!" she turned a white face over her shoulder. Catching Robert's eye as he stood in their midst, half doubting that this thing which had come upon him was true, she burst into sudden hysterical tears; and then could have sunk with shame next minute, for the weeping seemed such a lie.

Robert came swiftly in and kissed her hand; and still she sat crouched in her chair, looking sometimes over her shoulder and sometimes out at the street before her, while the wild whirl of preparation went swiftly on. Hastie, with a kind of snort — a snort is not speech — passed her and went on up the stairs.

It was not above fifteen minutes before Robert was ready and came down to her. Her face was so white that he was moved to pity. He put aside his own pain and grief to comfort hers. He felt such confidence in her love for him that he believed the parting was harder for her than it was for himself. And then, too, his was the man's part; he went into action, while she must sit at home and eat her heart out.

He took her gently in his arms. After a little while he said: "Good-bye, heart of my heart, my wife, my goddess among women. See, love, I cannot die now that you love me and are mine; I will come back; only a little time, brave heart,"

and with a sudden shower of kisses on her face in which Diana felt some tears, he was gone.

His horse was at the door, but she did not stay to see him mount. With head held high, she swept past the group in the hallway and on up to her own room. Once there, she shot the bolt and was alone with Diana — no, not Diana Chaters, but Diana Marshall.

She went to her glass and looked in it. "Well," she said, beneath her breath, summoning desperately a cold, set sneer to her face, "I've trumped it; I have made my play, and won. Naught could have fallen out more exactly to my liking. I —" then with a sudden little catch in her breath, "I will feel better directly. I have not yet realised this matter of the people about me expecting me to feel sad. It has affected me. But in a little while — in a little while," with her hands clasped over her heart, "I shall begin to see how well I have builded, how wisely I have done."

Below stairs, Sir Paris and Hastie were finally left alone. "Well," said the gentleman, settling himself easily in an armchair, after seeing that his guest was as comfortably disposed, "my heart bleeds for that young man; but he hath chosen. It was not likely that with such love-making as my niece held toward him, he would choose otherwise; and now the young lady herself is suddenly brought to answer. I realise, my dear Hastie, that here is a very pretty picture for a philosopher to muse upon. It is a vice of women (if you will pardon me the expression), and more especially of young and unmarried women, to live in the fictitious, as one may say, to figure before their little world as this

or that, — a saint, or even, if they cannot come by such distinction, a very great sinner. My niece, Diana, has ever posed as a very great personage, whose doings were most important, who was to be envied, to be admired, to be feared, but most of all to be ever and much thought upon by everybody. 'Twas not how the thing pleased her which engaged her attention, but how it would strike the onlooker. 'Is this well done, and as a great lady should?' she seemed to inquire of each performance. But now, my dear Hastie, now she has come up squarely to a reality, a marriage, and her husband gone to the wars, a thing in which she can certainly not longer play the actress."

Hastie had been writing upon her tablets during the latter part of this speech. Now she extended toward him some lines, which ran, "I agree with you. Men's faults are natural, for they go to them like beasts. Women's faults are against nature, and, for the matter of that, against themselves. It seems to me that if my cousin Diana had thought more upon what really pleased herself, and less upon the bedazzlement of those about her, she would have come to less harm."

"Beasts?" commented Sir Paris gently. "'Tis so you miscall men, my Hastie. Well, a beast may be a gentle, amiable, wholesome creature. Perchance if some of these high, goddess-like females had more of the simple beast in them they might be more suitable companions for the men of whom you so slightly speak."

Again the little tablet lay in his hand with. "Nay, I do not miscall men. For my part I am fond of them, as you know. Where I would take issue

with you in regard to Diana is, that you speak of her as approbative. Now I have ever found her most haughty, self-involved, and caring not at all to please."

"Caring not at all to please," repeated Sir Paris. "There you err, my Hastie, brilliant and keen as your judgment usually is. She cares not to soothe, but her approbateness is of that misunderstood sort which belongs to a haughty, self-willed nature, and which thinks of naught else but astonishing its fellow creatures in one way or another. Admiration is the breath of her nostrils, and yet she would never lower her dignity one inch by seeming openly to care for it. Your gentle, approbative creature labours to draw love and approval from those about it. Your proud, arrogant, self-conscious, approbative ruffler—or minx—will have gaping admiration and amazed envy, if it must be thumped out of the beholders' heads. And this last is my niece, Diana."

While these two talked amiably together, Diana above stairs had seated herself before her glass, very ghastly, cowed, and miserable. She was wondering now if Robert was yet gone, if he would ride past that way. This thought took her to the window, where she hid behind the curtains, crouching forward in her chair, waiting.

There came a little stir below stairs, an outburst of happy voices, then a laugh, and after it another—and Diana was moved to quick anger. How dared they! when the master of the house—he was the master of the house, if she chose to say so—how dared they! when the master of the

house was gone and might never return — gone perhaps to his death?

She was starting toward the door, her face covered with tears, when there came a quick, bounding step on the stair which brought the blood to her face and her heart into her mouth.

Up and up that light, vigorous step leaped, till it was at her door. Then, with no rap upon the panels, with only the glad cry, "Diana! Diana!" the door flung open.

She was caught up in a close embrace, swept off her feet, and laid upon Robert's breast, while in the dusk Robert's lips whispered against her ear, "Oh, love — love — love! Not yet — not yet! I am come back to you — my faithful heart — my mourning dove! The general is here. All plans are changed. We do not go to the front for weeks."

And her face, her hair, her neck, were covered with eager kisses, while Robert's heart beat fast and uneven beneath her cheek.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WORSE

"O LORDE, what is this worldis blisse
That chaungeth as the mone!
My somer's day in lusty May
Is derked before the none."

IT was a strange honeymoon, this of these two young creatures met so by a mere hazard, so little acquainted one with the other.

In her own secret mind, that mind the least glimpse into whose workings would have struck Robert dumb with amazement, and indeed with despair, Diana had been worsted, outwitted by chance and a clumsy boy's guileless ardour.

She had sought to have the name of wife, the sword-arm to her cause, along with complete personal freedom and independence of the obligations of wifehood. She had succeeded in making herself a wife indeed, and to a wholly deceived husband, young, high-minded, and with ideals and beliefs in store which, when she considered them, made Diana most dubious of a champion, a sword-arm abjectly and unquestioningly at her behest.

She told herself bitterly that she might better have settled on some man where the match would not have been so equal, some one, as she mentally

put it, not so nearly worthy of her; an old man, for instance, of weaker will, who would have doted upon her and been more easily led. Even a man of Captain Quillian's age might have excused her demands, on the score of youth; but what could she hope from one who was as imperious, as exacting, and almost as young as herself? How should she ever dare to tell him anything? She recoiled at the mere suggestion.

Her only compensation for all this defeat was in meeting a man so young, handsome, young, and charming — in the face of those who had witnessed her marriage at St. Philip's. She spent much time inventing situations at various elegant dinners and dances where she would be bidden as Mistress Robert Marshall, when this war was well over, and where she should scorn and trample upon her recent rivals and detractors back in Charles Town. Yes, after all, her courage rose to meet the situation. This young gentleman, who had shone with such unrivalled lustre at the Ashburnham dinner and dance — he was the sort of husband whom she could make boast of, and she would have been foolish to content herself with less.

That such a man had been somewhat difficult to marry all in haste, as she had done, was natural enough, she told herself. It had then but added to her resolution that it should be so.

That such a man was not possible to treat as she had meant to treat this husband; that, after all her descending to such lying and subterfuge, chance had thwarted her and made him her husband indeed, had for a time daunted and silenced that worser angel of hers. In the face of real wifehood — and wife-

hood to a young, beautiful, and adoring husband — it could not, for the moment, assert itself. And this unforeseen shaping of events left her position — in that fictitious realm where she mentally lived — so complicated, warped, and twisted that she had difficulty in seizing once more her threads of purpose.

That there was at the bottom of what she had done, or refrained from doing, any grain of admiration for the boy, any tenderness, relenting, or leaning toward him, she daily and hourly denied to herself. And those very denials, so often repeated, were in themselves suspicious.

Just before her marriage, Diana had bought a plantation out on the sound, and renamed it Sapelo. There was a small hut upon the ground already, and some very considerable improvements had been made in the way of clearing and tillage. A slightly bluff overlooking the river was selected as the place for the beautiful brick house which she meant to build, it being the custom of nearly all the planters of that time to have both a town and a country residence.

Sir Paris, who had found the grounds at Chaters House so well filled already as to make his carefully saved seeds, roots, and plants almost superfluous, revelled in the planning of these new gardens at Sapelo. To superintend them more closely, he even tore himself away from his beloved Belinda, who could not endure the hardships of such a residence, and took up his abode in the small hut, with Junius's successor to wait upon him and cook for him.

At first, his absence was a relief. Diana's emotions were scarcely to be classified from hour to hour; but uppermost generally was the dread of

anybody thinking for an instant that she was not — as she had ever been wont to do — ruling her life and having her own way.

The war news from below became so urgent that not much else was discussed in the town. Robert, Diana, and Agnes were left almost completely to themselves in Chaters House. Social diversion was scarcely thought of. General Oglethorpe was still at Frederica. One feature of the situation which, in a negative way, helped matters, was that Robert was desperately overworked, occupied the day long with a multitude of petty harassing details of preparation for the expedition.

It was not strange that with his youth, his ignorance of women, and his disposition to value himself at least sufficiently, he should have taken at their face value Diana's unusual evidences of love for him. It was not strange that it should have bred in him an absolute confidence in her adoration for him, and induced : : attitude toward her which, in spite of his great affection for her, was almost pity.

To a woman of Diana's pride, one who piqued herself upon being coldly indifferent to all men and their admiration, and whose sole excuse to herself for her behaviour toward Robert Marshall was that she cared nothing for him — this to her was galling. It continually urged her to show him the falsity of his beliefs; and yet she was astonished to find herself, after she was once a wedded wife, (and to a man of her own spirit and breeding,) strangely helpless. Her refuge was a stupid sullenness, which she realised could do nothing else but convince him

that he had been mistaken as to her wit and charm, and to make him regret his precipitate marriage.

To so approbative a creature as this poor, proud, misguided child, the thought of his receiving such an impression was intolerable, and led her to occasional sudden displays of affection, which nothing else (save one thing) could have drawn from her. The other item which worked toward her continuing to pose as a loving wife was Agnes's attitude.

Of the three people in Chaters House at this time, Agnes was not the least perturbed and wretched. It would have been natural to her to be fond of Robert Marshall. Yet his every manly virtue and charm gave her a jealous twinge, on account of the absent Cameron. That Diana should be able to love him so soon after her affair with Archie, seemed to this faithful soul monstrous. And when, after her marriage to Robert, Diana occasionally slighted and mistreated him, Agnes felt in a sense that her own unaltered devotion to Cameron was vindicated.

One morning, when Robert was leaving Chaters House to go to the Company headquarters for his daily round of duties, he came back from the door seeking Diana. She was above stairs, and he called up to her, "I forgot to bid you good-bye, my love."

Diana looked down with a strange light in her eyes. "Why, 'twill not be for so long, sir," she said, equivocally; "and if you think you can survive till noon, I shall try to do so."

Marshall turned without a word, and left her standing there looking scornfully after him. From a seat in the landing, Agnes unseen watched her, while the proud head drooped and drooped, and

finally some very bitter tears fell upon the hand she had folded on the balustrade.

"Poor girl," said Agnes softly, coming up behind her, "poor child, I warned you that Archie Cameron was none so easy forgotten by one who had given him her heart."

"Archie Cameron indeed!" flamed Diana. "Do you suppose that I am standing here weeping for *him*? the hound! Are you aware, Mistress MacBain, that you insult both my husband and myself with such words as that? Ah, 'tis not well when one's servants know too much of one's affairs!"

She went into her own room, her head held very high, her cheeks scarlet. "I will show that pitiful idiot," she said to herself, "whether I care so much for Archibald Cameron. I will show her that I told her the truth when I said I never cared for him one doot."

And when poor Robert came home to his noon dinner, half dreading the sight of his enigmatical bride, he found himself caught inside the hall door, (but in very plain view of Agnes MacBain, you may be sure,) kissed, and entreated for forgiveness by a most charming and penitent Diana, who accused herself that she had a wicked, wicked temper, and was jealous of the work which took him so much from her.

For nearly a week after this, Diana played her part to her own satisfaction, and the confusion of Mistress MacBain and any other observers who might doubt her devotion to her bridegroom.

The best of men so treated must become unwarrantably vain. Robert fell into an irritating habit of apologising for his ordinary absences from her.

It was not to be wondered at that he felt this necessary, nor was it strange that she should find it maddening.

In these days Diana's fancy ran greatly to the construction of letters to her late bridesmaids, in which she should inform them of her present felicity. She taxed her mind, which was fruitful in such matters, for irony, for cutting speeches which should open up old rents she knew of in their garments. She considered how best the news could be brought to Cameron himself. She dwelt with delight upon an imaginary scene in which her husband should bring this man to book. She fancied people saying that it was ill offending one of the Chaters, that he had gotten no more than his deserts (the man was dead in her mind by this time, and his mother already wearing crêpe).

To Miss Eliza Lucas, scarcely more than an acquaintance, Diana had written announcing her marriage, in the hope that the news would be spread in Charles Town from this letter. She asked her correspondent plumply as to the whereabouts of Archibald Cameron, and what was said of him now in Charles Town, adding, "I cannot deny an unpleasant kind of interest in this man, though my whole heart is given to my dear husband. Indeed, I mainly wish to know where Major Cameron is that I may take such precaution as is possible that these two men should not meet, for I cannot doubt that a meeting between them would be fatal, though my confidence in the prowess of the gentleman whom I have wedded leads me to believe that he would not be the sufferer."

This letter having gone up some time before the

actual marriage, indeed, directly after the wedding had been decided upon, she received, two weeks after that date, a reply in which Miss Lucas, after assuring her that the good people of Charles Town, all whose opinions were worth having, considered her to be hardly used, and were unwilling to give any countenance to Cameron, added that the gentleman had never been seen in Charles Town after the day upon which he collected his wagers, and that the saying went with many that he was ashamed to show his face upon the streets, if not afraid to do so. "Pray believe, my dear Mistress Marshall," the epistle ran, "that you have many good friends and well-wishers in this town, who would not suffer any slight to be cast upon you with impunity."

A certain ghastly blankness settled upon Diana at this intelligence. Cameron was gone. He had departed into that unknown world from which he had emerged for her undoing. He was not there in Charles Town to receive intelligence of her marriage. Even those whom she had thought to confound with this news were preparing to be kind to her without it.

What, after all, had been the actuating motive of her marriage? Wounded pride, lacerated vanity, and terror of the world's speech; a desire to place herself once more on a pinnacle, to escape from the pillory in which her own imagination had placed her. And now, after all, it seemed there was no pillory; her wounds were quite without a cause; her marriage only another blunder.

In these days Robert Marshall was sorely puzzled and distressed. The colour had died out of his young wife's cheeks, the light from her eyes, and

the spring from her step. She was haggard, listless, pitiful; and if she was fretful and even wounding in her manner toward himself, he bore with it, his patience reinforced by his appreciation of the suffering in her white face.

If General Oglethorpe had been in Savannah, Robert would have made a confidant of his superior officer. If Sir Paris, even, had not been at Sapelo, the boy would have talked to him. "I know nothing of women," he said to himself; "like enough 'tis natural, and the way most maids do bear themselves when they are wed. 'Tis possible she needs some diversion. She seems sadly moped; and it may be, after all, the distress of looking forward to my departure which now seems to make her so strange toward me."

Going home at noon one day, after they had been married some six or seven weeks, Robert found Diana evincing considerable interest in a letter received from Sir Paris, asking her to let him have two of the negroes employed about the house to go with him to Wynnewoode. Hastie had promised him certain plants and instructions with which he was much delighted, and which he desired to secure at once. Closing, he spoke, in formal ornate phrase, of his niece's "present state of felicity."

"My felicity!" she commented angrily. "To sit cooped in a house in this uncouth, barbarous land, and listen to stories of the preparations which are made for a war! I wonder what my uncle thinks a young, beautiful woman should delight in."

"He knows," put in Robert gallantly, "that you are not an ordinary woman, Diana. He is aware that you have the keen brain of a man."

"So much the more reason," she flung out, "that I am moped to death with this sort of life. I think that, till this war is over, I should be at home."

"In Virginia, do you mean?" inquired Robert sternly.

"No, in England; I have no home in Virginia," the girl retorted.

"Have you a home in England?" asked Marshall, with rising heat.

"I could make one there; I have kin there. It is at least a place fit for a gentlewoman to live in."

"And this is not?" he inquired, sarcastically. "You would seem to accuse me of the place, Diana. But remember, I did not bring you here — nor should ever have done so; but 'tis the place where I married you. And, madam, I will say to you now that the place in which a gentlewoman's husband lives is, to my thinking, the most fitting place for a gentlewoman to live."

Diana rose, and went to a window where she stood looking out, brooding upon the tangle which she had made of her affairs. This was the man she had talked of turning from her doors when it pleased her, this person who took such calm authority, not only over her actions but over her very thoughts! She longed to be round with him, to tell him, once for all, the ground upon which he stood; yet there was too much to explain.

Robert's quick temper was already subsiding. He looked at the slender figure by the casement, and his heart misgave him that he had been harsh. A moment more and he would have had her in his arms, his repentant lips upon hers, a tender apology murmured between kisses. But just at this point,

"My uncle has arrived," Diana said, and turning, went from the room to greet Sir Paris. So opportune was his entrance, so welcome his presence, that Diana received him with great cordiality.

At the dinner-table Sir Paris regaled the young pair with a somewhat lengthened account of affairs at Sapelo, and of the improvements which he hoped to make by means of Hastie's advice and suggestions. As the three sat trifling with their dessert, Robert — to whom Diana's presence had become an actual torment in spite of his affection for her — looked from her courteous, pleasant face to the smiling face of her uncle, and an idea which he considered brilliant was born in his brain.

"Why should you not go with Sir Paris to your cousin Hastie's, for a little stay, my love?" he asked. "I am extremely busy and occupied. I cannot give you that attention and that amount of time which it would be my delight to do. I do not wonder that you feel yourself neglected, and are moped and dull. What would be better than this little journey with your uncle, and the society of your cousin, whom I think a most sweet gentlewoman?"

In Diana's pale cheeks the red rose flamed and her eyes flashed. She had shilly-shallied until her bridegroom himself proposed sending her from him! "I shall certainly go," she said, with emphasis; "nothing could delight me more. Will it be convenient, uncle dear, for me to accompany you?"

Sir Paris turned a troubled gaze from one young face to the other. The words sounded smooth enough, and yet he was not satisfied that all was well. "Why, surely, my dear," he said, "if —

if you desire to go, and Robert here thinks he can spare you."

"O, as to that," Diana sneered, "you can see for yourself what he thinks of the matter."

"I am so busy," Robert repeated apologetically, "I am so worn and wearied with these multitudinous and harassing details that I have scarce time to appreciate Mistress Marshall's society at its value just now."

Diana rose, and left the men to their wine. In the drawing-room she paced up and down, her hands clenched, her cheeks still burning. "Go, will I?" she said, to herself. "Yea, and will not return easily. This, after all his protestations of love!" and she seated herself at her spinet.

Believing herself a very ill-used wife, and yet not choosing that her husband or her uncle should find her grieving or unoccupied, she sent for Agnes, who had a pleasant contralto voice, singing what they called "counter" to Diana's treble, and the two were soon making the rooms melodious with "Allan Water," and "The Bailiff's Daughter of Islington." Robert evidently left his wine to join them, for the baronet was some time later in reaching the drawing-room.

Diana had, in the early days of their courtship, praised her lover's voice immoderately. Indeed, it was a voice which she could never hear in singing without a certain emotion, and she would have preferred, since she desired to be very hard and cold, that he did not sing with them, but found no reason to decline when he picked out the three-part songs and catches, and begged very sweetly that they sing them together, for that she would be going away

with Sir Paris in the morning, and he might not see her for a week.

Diana, whose wildest and most revengeful idea of a stay at Wynnewoode had in fact not gone beyond a day or two, found her supply of fortitude again drawn upon. In the pause of their music (Agnes had been asked to sing a Scotch ballad) he leaned down and whispered: "Were you offended with me, Diana, for proposing to send you away? Indeed, love, the house will be dreary without you; but I cannot bear to have you moped and unhappy on my account."

It was some small compensation to merely answer him with a little shrug of her shoulders, and, "Truly, sir, your suggestion fell in so aptly with my humour that I was glad enough of it, however unflattering."

And again Robert's face was at first angrily offended, then half sad, baffled, and perplexed.

They sat late for the times, singing and talking together, with a surface which was quite pleasant, and an undercurrent which to all of them was uneasy. It was eleven o'clock when the little company in the parlour broke up, and then Diana gave her husband his candle, observing that she would be occupied for some hours yet with packing and arranging for her journey, and would now bid him good-bye, since she must be called for an early start on the morrow, and would therefore sleep below stairs in a small guest room.

A silent shock went through the group, instantly and completely covered by the formal breeding of the time. The adieus, by this arrangement, took place before Sir Paris and Agnes, and were limited

to a formal kiss, with no explanations asked or offered.

Diana, poor girl, slept neither above nor below stairs, for she did not close her eyes till Juno came to call her, as she sat ready, her great gray travelling cloak and hood thrown over a chair beside her, her packets fully prepared, so that there was nothing for the negress to do.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE OUTCOME

“‘WHAT had ye for supper, Lord Donald, my son?
What had ye for supper, my jollie young man?’
‘I’ve gotten my supper: Oh! mak my bed sune,
For I’m sick at the heart, and I fain would lie down.’”

THE next day after Diana’s departure for Wynnewoode, Oglethorpe came into Savannah, being on his way to Carolina from the Sea Islands. Believing that at this juncture his negotiations with the Assembly could be better sped in person, the general had left with reluctance his labours in fortifying the island of St. Simons to go himself to Charles Town, and lay before the people of that city, and of the province in general, such propositions as he could make, and to urge upon them the danger in which the whole coast stood if once the Spaniard overran Georgia.

When he was told of Diana’s absence, he said, “I shall need a clerk most mightily, but I have not had the heart to break in upon your honeymoon. But ’tis seven weeks — is it not? — since you were wed. Now, with Mistress Marshall at Wynnewoode, I shall take countenance to carry you with me. The trip must, for both of us, be a brief one; I could even spare you to return here before my

plans are completed, should negotiations be long in making."

It would be wrong to say that Oglethorpe was not, in a vague way, impressed that his young companion's affairs matrimonial were scarcely progressing favourably. Yet, with his head so full of graver matter, he reflected less upon this subject than he would have done at another time. Diana or Sir Paris, or both, he supposed, had given the lad a full account of her previous disaster. The marriage was, to his thinking, imprudently hurried; and had he been in Savannah at the time of its occurrence, he would no doubt have remonstrated. But this great man was a mender of breaches, a healer of hurts, rather than a critic, particularly when the event was past; and his solicitude showed itself mainly in an added kindness toward his young lieutenant. Indeed, he held with the boy an almost fatherly tone, which was warranted by his achievements if not by his years.

It was the second day of their stay in Charles Town that young Marshall came to him from a supper at the club, which some of the junior officers had given in the lieutenant's honour, and inquired with a very white face whether the general had known from the first of Diana's interrupted wedding with Archibald Cameron.

"Good God! my poor boy," cried Oglethorpe, springing up and laying a hand upon his shoulder, "is't possible she did not —" There he checked himself. "Nay, I can see," he went on, more cautiously; "she loved you from the first, and feared to lose you by telling of this. Surely, surely, Marshall, you cannot hold against the poor child a

cruel mischance, in which she was but the innocent victim," and he threw his arm caressingly across the younger man's shoulder.

Robert's face was white and drawn. Oglethorpe never knew what had occurred at the supper, nor cared to know, nor asked. It hurt him, as it hurts us to see the pain of a child, when the poor, proud young creature set his half-trembling lip, and answered, sturdily: "I find no fault with Mistress Marshall, sir. I — 'tis not for me to question that matter. She had her reasons, and good ones, no doubt — 'the queen can do no ill.'" And he managed a pitiful smile.

"That is right, my boy," his superior said, patting the shoulder upon which his hand lay. "If you carry home that spirit, all will be well between you. She is a most superior lady, and hath been cruelly used in this matter. Do not you add one unmanly blow to what she hath already endured."

"There is a piece of business," Robert began, hesitatingly, "which I must ask leave to attend to to-morrow morning. I probably cannot be here by eight o'clock for to go with you to the Assembly, as was arranged, but shall get there as soon after as may be."

"Robert!" cried Oglethorpe sharply. "this is no time for private quarrels. I need my clerk."

"You shall have him," Robert answered, with a quiet half-smile. "I can write with my left hand, so that if anything happens to the other arm, we shall not be quite thrown out."

Oglethorpe was too good a soldier to object further. He was aware that, according to the code of honour of his day, there might be reasons imper-

ative for this meeting which he suspected; and when Robert joined him next morning at the Assembly rooms, his right hand bandaged and that arm in a sling, the general asked no questions. Nor did Robert's face tell him anything. But it was true that the sword which Diana had bought at such cost was fleshed in her cause for the first time that morning.

In the nights which followed, the tangle of Robert Marshall's affairs, even more than the pain of his slight wound, kept him ill company. At times, the whole matter unravelled itself and lay clear to his vision. He saw without doubt that he had never been loved; that he had been wedded as a bravo is hired. He thought upon that evening of his return, after the sudden marriage and immediate departure, when he had so confidently discounted Diana's even greater love for him and longing for him than his for her; and burned with shame to find himself so easily deceived. He, so courted, so desired, had been made to occupy the loathed position of an unwelcome bridegroom, a profferer of undesired caresses — oh! and his pride cried out even more than his love. Every boyish, boastful sentence which had carried presumption of her love, came back to him and stood out before his mind as a reproach; and when he remembered that he had called her his "mourning dove," he grovelled abjectly in spirit. For verily a man's vanity will bleed when his heart is still whole; and poor Robert was greatly wounded in both.

During the day, the press of important business kept these matters somewhat from his mind. It was in the night he suffered and brooded, and finally

won through to a saner way of looking at matters. He and Diana were wedded; they must make the best of it. Marriage, even before he learned of this thing, had appeared to him a somewhat trying condition. Probably they would be neither more nor less well suited with each other than their neighbours; and for his part, he came to a manly resolution to do his utmost both for his wife's sake and his own. And this decision brought a sort of peace, in which he was able to write Diana a brief note advising her of his anticipated return to Savannah, and asking that she be at Chaters House to meet and welcome him.

Meantime, Diana at Wynnewoode found many windmills to tilt at. Not the least among them was the fear that Hastie might suppose Robert less devoted than he should be in permitting her to leave him when the honeymoon was barely over. Diana's natural defence against such a supposition on her cousin's part, was to assert that she came to Wynnewoode of her own motion, that she was moped to death at Chaters House and glad to be away; and to assume in speaking of her newly made husband an overbearing and blindly egotistic tone, which Hastie observed with her usual sardonic calm.

"I think I was wise to wed when I did, Cousin Hastie," Diana began, one morning, as though she were discussing the cut of a sacque or the manner of a head-dressing. "I make no doubt I shall find a well-bred, genteel husband convenient to me. I am planning to visit my kin in England, and I should much rather go back a married woman than a spinster."

"Does your husband accompany you?" Hastie wrote.

"Why, yes, I think I will take him," Diana drawled, coolly. "I call him a very pretty fellow; and I find him good company, too."

"I should not have guessed it," Hastie pencilled, instantly, and then was half-ruthful, because the comment seemed inhospitable.

In short, Diana Marshall was at her worst during these weeks in her cousin's house, for two weeks passed before a packet of belated letters brought out from Savannah carried to her the information of Robert's departure for Charles Town, and also of his expected return. The days lived under Hastie's grim, silent displeasure had prepared her guest for an outburst of some sort. Hastie had consistently believed the worst of her, and Diana scorned to fall short of the expectation.

Reading these two letters in her chamber, able to communicate neither their contents nor the cause of offence which they contained, since she dared not tell her cousin that she had married Robert without fully informing him of her previous experience, she fell into what Hastie accepted as a perfectly natural manifestation of idiot rage, packed her belongings, demanded a horse for the journey, was set across to the mainland on the ferry, and, with Bennerworth for escort, rode back to Savannah.

In spite of his good resolutions, Robert was not prepared to hold a pacific course toward such a termagant as now came home to him. Agnes had made him comfortable in his room, where he sat in a large chair at a window, his injured hand laid, for the greater ease, upon a small stand beside him. The

face he turned toward the door was one which Chaters House had never seen. It was the countenance which had risen with him from the board, at that supper in Charles Town; and Agnes, upon her first sight of it, had guessed a good part of what had happened, and was now to come.

In the hour of its bereavement, disaster, or disgrace, the honest, staid, wealthy house is shut upon the street. Silent, dignified, reserved, it disallows the careless, impertinent curiosity of the general. At a significant word flung over an impudent shoulder for him to hear, Robert had an instant's revelation of the whole set of circumstances surrounding his courtship and marriage. In this illumination he glimpsed all that had been done to him, all that he was yet to suffer of disappointment, shame, and desolation of soul. And before the evening was over, he had made demand, been answered, and plumbed the depth of his calamity.

As such a house is shut, strong in the safety of custom, upon the prying insolence of the street, while the master and his household take counsel, realise and accept their fate, and prepare to meet life again in some altered state or attitude; so, in the very instant that his whole being seemed to him reeling helplessly to the shock, there came over Robert's face, without knowledge or volition of his, this set, shut look; and, as it had appeared before the young blades of the Charles Town supper-party, grave, defensive, unresponding, it yet remained.

This was on the outside, in the street; this was his bearing toward the world. But within — ah, within!

Behind that safe and decent barrier heart, mind, spirit — the whole thinking man — stood back

shivering in the blankness of despair, or looked with aching eyes about the shattered edifice of his life, the ruined fabric of his trust, turning slow and shrinking glances from loss to loss, from pain to pain, calling whisperingly upon his company and household of hopes, interests, resources, for counsel or comfort, and hearing, in the empty house of his soul, no sound, no answer, but the faint echo of his own cry.

Diana dismounted at the front door, giving the rein to Sogo, who had run out to receive it. Bennerworth declined to enter, saying he had business in the town before he could ride back; so she dismissed him with thanks and most kindly smiles, and went in prepared for battle.

Agnes's reproachful face met her in the hallway. "Your husband is in his chamber," she volunteered. "He has a wound which I have been dressing."

"A wound!" echoed Diana, with sudden tremor, and flew up the stairs.

"Where were you hurt? What is the matter?" she cried, bursting into the room. Her eyes, dilated, fixed themselves upon the bandaged arm. It was the sword-arm. She rushed instantly to a conclusion, and a glance at her young husband's set, inscrutable face, with all the colour and light washed out of it, seemed to confirm her anticipations.

"It is nothing," Marshall answered briefly; "a hurt I got in handling some tools;" and here missed the one thing which might have ameliorated matters between them.

"And so, sir," Diana quavered, standing before him tall and pale, "you choose to go about spying and prying upon a wretched woman's affairs till —"

"I, spying on you!" cried Marshall hotly. "You are mad, Diana! That I did not know what every tap-room loafer was well informed of when I married you, proved me no spy. It had been better, perhaps, for both of us, had I possessed more of the caution which goes to make a spy. A spy!" he added, half under his breath, "O God, a spy! A gull, you surely mean."

"Well, sir," Diana plucked up spirit to go on — her rage was rising and warmed her terror out — "well, sir, and after hearing with a straight face all that every Paul's man, and cast-captain, and blackguard in Charles Town could tell you, you are come back to me to have your rage out on a miserable woman, who is your most unhappy wife. Is that it?"

Robert rose, lifting the injured hand and slipping it into its sling. "Madam," he said, in a voice thick with passion, "I came here to forgive you for the most unkind deceit ever practised upon man. I believed — dolt that I was —"

"Oh, forgive!" burst in Diana. "Hear this man speaking from the heights of his magnanimity! And what, sir — if a lost, outcast soul like myself might make inquiry — what have you to forgive in Diana Chaters?"

"Diana Marshall, madam," Robert corrected.

"What have you, sir? Out with it. Let's make no more concealments."

"'Tis time indeed you had no more concealments!" returned Marshall. "This I hold against you: that you had no more thought of my welfare in this matter than has the huntsman for the welfare of the hare. Oh, I grant you I was a pitifully easy

dupe! I was ready enough to think myself beloved. And yet — for heaven's sake, Diana! — less would have sufficed. When I think of your protestations, of your promises, of the things you said and did — ” He turned his face away, for there were tears in his eyes which he was unwilling she should see.

His words brought up before Diana's mind her whole campaign of courtship. The sweet looks, the sighs and broken sentences, the tears and passionate pleadings and frantic kisses.

These were the things, to remember whose falsehood broke the boyish heart, and ground the boyish pride to bloody dust. To remember that they had ever been at all, to be bidden remember them by him whose doltishness had made them necessary, stung and maddened Diana past anything her undisciplined life had ever known. She laid about her for the most cutting, the most withering rejoinder she could make.

“ Why, so far as that is concerned,” she said with an assumption of cool, cynical bravado, “ it suited me to be no longer a spinster. I did what was necessary, sir, to purchase me a sword-arm and a name. If you think I paid too dearly for these things which I then conceived necessities, why, you think no more than I do. One cannot always tell just what the cost, when one buys.”

Now she looked up and caught the glint of Marshall's eye. Its deep blue was steely, and that young, warm, dimpled face of his was wholly colourless, the jaw set all boyish immaturity seemed erased from it for ever. There was nothing left of the lad she had cajoled, and thought to bend and mould.

“ Hold, Diana; stay your hand; these words are

not necessary. You overlook the fact that I am certainly not to remain under this roof, to patch a peace with you, madam, and abide on sufferance. You have the manner of one whipping a dog from the door. But again I tell you, there is no need. The boat which takes me south waits at the wharf. Whether I go or tarry, is with me."

"To go?" repeated Diana, in an unbearable tone, "'tis as easy — as to come back."

"Do you hint, madam," Marshall began, in level, even tones, "that I would return — return to you — to *this*?"

She laughed harshly. "They always do," she said, "the animals you speak of; once they forget their whipping, they come back."

"I will return to you, Diana," her husband went on, "I will return to you when you bid me return, and that with such an invitation as shall wipe out these insults, such a pledge as shall make right the wrong of our marriage. I, return to you — *I*? Nay, you will beg it indeed, ere I return. My packets are soon made; my effects need not be in this house an hour longer."

He threatened her. He hinted at the parting — the ignoring of their marriage tie — which was what she had alone desired — he menaced her with it — oh!

"'Tis well that they should not be," she choked, intoxicated with her own fury, "and see that they are not, sir. See that they —" she longed to strike him. That being impossible, "See that they are out of it shortly," she panted, "lest I set my servants to throw them from the doors."

Nowhere was the change in Robert Marshall more

apparent than in the dogged control which this high-spirited, volatile nature now held upon its indignation. "I forbear to say to you, Diana," he answered, "that the house is mine as well as yours. My house — my houses — in Virginia, though you told me not long ago you had no home there, belong certainly to you as well as to myself. We are tied together, poor souls, so far as material things may hold us."

"But in every thought and feeling," cried Diana, "we are wide asunder, sir. And if I cannot be free before the world, believe me, sir, I am the freer in my own mind from any claim of yours."

She looked at his cold, suffering young face, so shut against her, and her impotent rage lashed and tore her. Again she sought for a weapon of insult, and burst out, "Why, I wedded you as I would have called a lackey to perform any service for me. I was looking about, when chance tossed you here, for such a fellow, and I —"

"Shame — shame — oh, shame, Diana!" Robert's quiet voice checked her with a face of burning red, midway the wretched sentence.

Even at the height of his anger Robert knew she belied herself in these speeches. He was humiliated to the soul for her and sick to be done with them. She was silent. He turned and pulled the bell-rope, preparatory to sending for those who should do his packing. "Diana," he said, as he did so, "I leave one thing here in your hands — leave it of necessity, and not because I wish to — the name. You are Mistress Marshall, remember that. See that you hold this name above reproach. So far as any expectation of love or happiness is concerned, we are

no longer wedded; that is most true. Yet in this thing you will find me still your husband, and an exacting husband."

"Coward — brute!" choked Diana. "You would taunt me that I took so ill care of my own name that —"

A servant opened the door in answer to the master's summons; and wrapping Robert in a flaming glance, Diana fairly fled the room.

There was no concealing from the household this sudden rupture between the young pair. The raised voices, Marshall's abrupt departure immediately following Diana's return, published it to all within the walls of Chaters House. Agnes, of course, knew well what had happened. She dared not fault Diana; yet as she went about, to and fro, doing the wife's part, seeing that all necessary matters were gathered for the young lieutenant's comfort on his voyage down, and instructing his man how to dress the hand, which was now healing well, she cast many reproachful glances toward the small dressing-room into which her mistress had rushed, slamming and locking the door.

Agnes MacBain was, in her own quiet and almost feeble fashion, not lacking in courage, for she offered, when Marshall was ready for departure, to go and call Diana.

"Nay," returned the young soldier, kindly — a man must surely bear a soft heart to the woman who is good to him at such a time — "nay, Agnes, Mistress Marshall and I have said our farewells; it is not necessary. I would rather she were undisturbed."

And his last sight of Chaters House was with the

little gray figure standing in the door, tears upon the pale cheeks, a handkerchief waving after him.

The woman above stairs, already past the crisis of her rage, and treading that awful down-slope of despair, watched from behind the curtain, with hopeless eyes, for his departure.

But when at length he stepped forth, turning to answer Agnes's final Godspeed, and stealing a last uncontrollable glance up at that window, nothing at all lived at it. On her face, on the floor beneath it, Diana lay fast in a sick swoon.

CHAPTER XX.

THE BAD LEGS OF REPENTANCE

“‘I wot ye hae a bitter tongue,’
Sayed the queen mither, sae sayed she.
‘I wot ye hae a bitter speech,
Hath driven thy true-love away frae thee.’”

AFTER Robert's departure, the door of that little room into which Diana had retreated yet remained stubbornly closed. Agnes passed it a half-dozen times, looked at it with angry, accusing eyes, and so recent was the appeal of the young man's white, stricken face, that she was half in the mind to rap upon its panels, and when it should be opened, to tell the woman within what she thought of such doings. The humour passed, however, as time went on. She began, after the first ebullition of her sympathy subsided, to look upon the whole matter as a satisfactory tribute to Cameron's power.

Within the room, Diana crawled up alone from her swoon. She sat, weak and spent, and rallied her forces. Then she began to move about from window to door, from bureau to bed, from table to chair, pausing nowhere long, possessed by a very torture of restlessness. She had not removed her riding-skirt, but had kilted it up with a bodkin.

After a while, as her own heart yet sank and sank, and her temper lay supine, she felt acutely the need of an auditor, some one to whom she might justify her course. The remembrance of Agnes's face did not make her a hopeful person to select for this purpose. Surely her Cousin Hastie was even less so, yet the ties of blood are strong.

When she finally opened the door and went forth into the hall, the sight of a worn-out riding-glove of Robert's, left behind in the packing, and dropped upon the very threshold of the room from which he had just gone, caused her to start and half cry out, thinking to see beyond it his tall form and accusing face.

He was gone — gone perhaps to his death — they had parted in anger. But he was to blame — to blame — to blame! She told herself that, over and over and over.

Suddenly, as people sometimes do after a bereavement, she went in haste, and as though she were searching, from room to room of the whole house. Everywhere was some token of him. On her own dressing-table, the little silver cup, full of the pale March violets of the South. She could have shrieked at sight of it. Weep, she would not; and finally she glanced down at her riding-skirt, took out her watch, and found that this tragedy of her life had occupied just one hour upon the dial, and that she might, by starting at once, get back to Wynne-woode before night.

Possibly Bennerworth would be passing — had not yet gone. She ran feverishly for Agnes, directed that Pompey and Sogo be both sent up-town to seek

him, and some one set to keep watch at the front door, lest they miss him and he pass unnoticed.

A half-hour later, she rode again at the young man's side, retracing their steps of the morning, and explaining to him that in this interim Lieutenant Marshall had received his marching orders, and gone. Bennerworth, judging from her pale face and distraught manner that grief over her handsome husband's departure had made the house in which they had separated hateful to her, was choked with tender pity, and thereafter they rode in silence.

Arrived in Wynnewoode, Diana communicated the matter to Hastie in much the same fashion, and asked if she would be an acceptable guest for a few days, till her own house was settled somewhat, after the departure of its master.

Despair is an ill bedfellow. He turns and sighs and tosses; he rumples the covering and creases the sheets; he heats the pillow beneath the cheek, and, to cool it, wets it wringing wet with brine of tears. When there has at last been found in sleep a little respite, he snatches the sleeper suddenly from it, with a choking hand upon the throat, and horrid whisperings in the ear.

The next morning when the two ladies were finishing their breakfast, Hastie wrote upon her tablets, "You do not eat. It is a bad plan, my dear. Grief should be fed."

"Grief!" echoed the pale Diana, reaching feverishly for the plate of crumpets; "pray, Cousin Hastie, why should you thrust the word 'grief' at me? Am I supposed to be a 'mourning dove?'"

and she ejaculated Robert's phrase with startling bitterness.

Hastie watched her as she took the crumpet, buttered it, trifled with it, cut it into small pieces, essayed it again and again, and finally, confessing defeat, laid it aside, all with unsteady fingers. "You seem to be in much distress of mind," she wrote again, "which I find most natural under the circumstances; but I wish you would try to eat something. You could but expect that Robert would be called away. Soldiers' wives must bear these things as best they may."

"Bear it!" Diana cried; and then out came the ugly story of their quarrel, told with all Diana's bent for extremes and exaggerative phrasing. Hastie listened, pity in her face.

The two women rose silently when the brief outburst was over, and walked toward the front of the house. Before them lay the green lawn, and beyond that the paler green of the sea. The salt air stirred the white curtains at the windows, flowers were beginning to bloom everywhere, in that amiable March weather which almost equals a northern June.

Hastie motioned to her young relative to sit down upon one of the seats arranged on the porch, herself taking another one; she wrote so long upon her tablets that Diana rose and began walking restlessly up and down. When the little slate was put in her hand, it proved to be covered on both sides with close, fine writing. And there in terse sentences was set down the history of Hastie Wynnewoode's quarrel with her lover.

"My pride," it closed, "my cruel pride must have

an offering. And I gave it, not Ulysses; — God knows he may have been better off without such a wife as I would have made him in those days; — what I offered up to that pride was my youth, my happiness, my joy of life; for I have known none since. That I flung my poor voice after, declaring that since I had raised it to miscall him, my lover, I should raise it no more on earth till I could do so in humble apology to him for that fault, — this was a small matter. A lifelong silence counts but little; a lifelong sorrow is a lifelong death."

Diana read the story, which was more or less familiar to her. The tears started in her eyes, and she said, "But he was your lover — you loved him."

"Well," wrote Hastie, "and you?"

"I? Why, this man, he was nothing to me — nothing. A cloak to shed the rain off me — a patten to keep my shoe from the mud! Poor gull! I, care for him? No, indeed — never — nor for any man!"

Hastie's eyes had watched the girl soimbrely, as we watch a child who makes believe with a crumpled handkerchief, saying, "Now, this is a mouse — this is a rabbit." She wrote on her tablet the single query:

"Why are you wringing your joseph-edge?"

Diana laughed hysterically. "Was I doing so? Why, I did not know it. How foolish I am to be so excited. And yet, not so foolish, neither. I must not say that of myself. Were these not dreadful things that happened to me? Were they not? Did ever a lady suffer such — and meet them in such wise?" She turned a ghostly, fleeting smile

on Hastie. "Think you that many maids would have done what I did?"

"Married Robert Marshall?" wrote Hastie. "Why, yes, any of them. He was young, well born and bred, rich, a beautiful lad; I never saw a more lovable —"

Diana put out a protesting hand upon the slate. "Ah! Ah! But there's where I showed my mettle. Which one of them, having married this paragon — as you make him out to be — would have wedded him untouched by his perfections? Which one would have gone through it all with a heart of ice — would have married him to suit her own ends, and then been rid of him as I have done?"

"After living with him near a month," wrote Hastie, and regarded her young cousin with a dry smile.

Diana gazed at her with a pitiful assumption of bravado. "I —" she began, and words failed her. She sat and looked on the ground.

And again Hastie wrote and laid the slate in the other's lap.

"You found it not so easy to put down, to turn aside, to deny and dismiss a man of young Robert's measure. It took you some weeks to stew that fiend's temper of yours to the point where you could wreak on Robert the spite which Archie left bubbling in you. Poor baby — poor Diana — I'm sorry for you. You needs must break your toy — your beautiful toy — because you were still in a sullen rage that another had splashed mud upon you."

"No, Hastie — you shall not say such things — I will not have it. Your bitter temper I bear with in

ordinary, — but this is more than ordinary. I say I will not have it. I sent Robert Marshall away solely of my own will. I had for the man — from the first — a cold misliking. I married him, as I tell you, to serve my own ends, to be Mistress Robert Marshall, with a husband to mention, and not poor, flouted, shamed Diana Chaters."

Hastie laughed a silent laugh. "You courted him well," she wrote, "and never thought that, coming so close to his fires, you might yourself be warmed. Poor silly!"

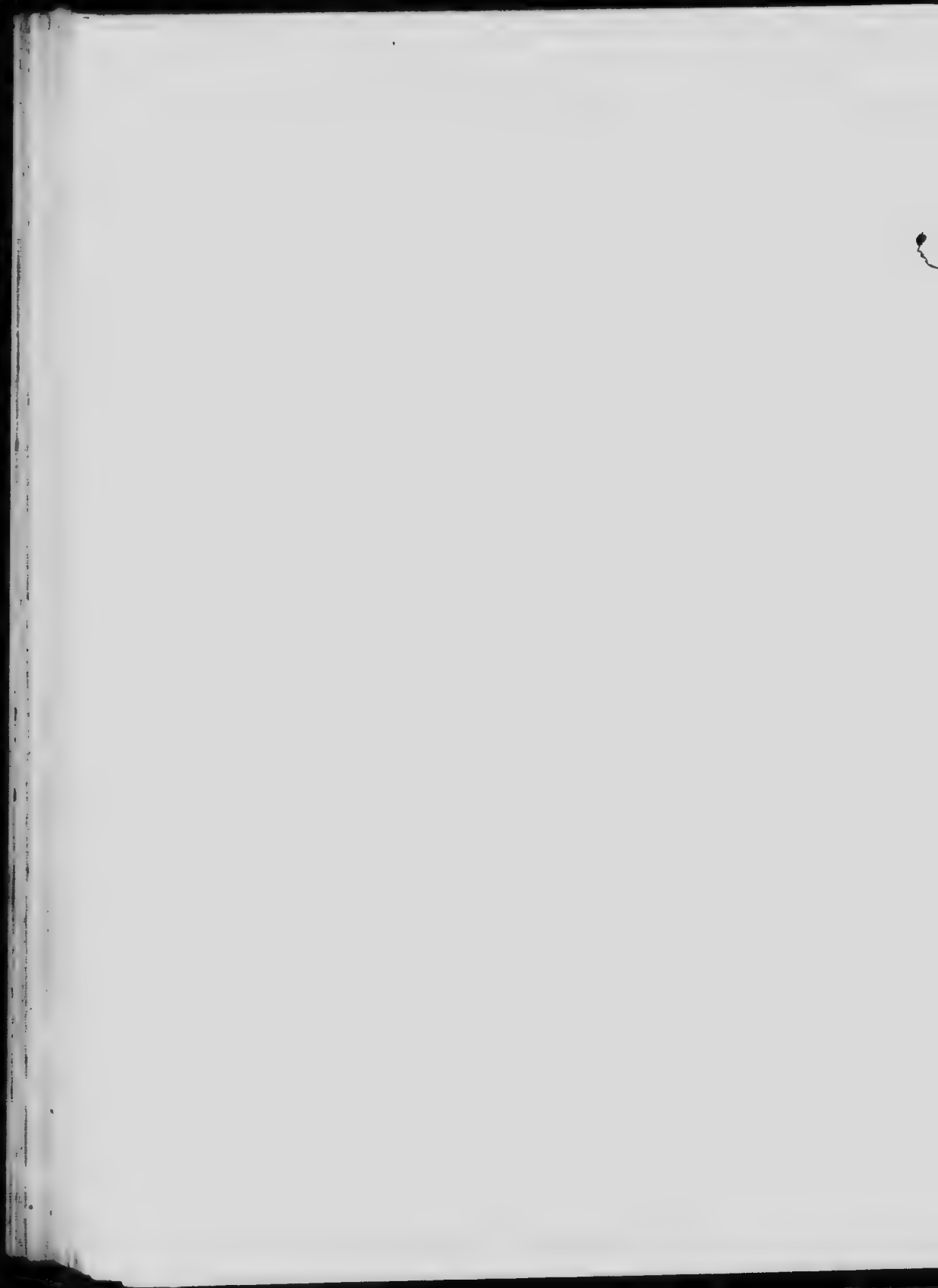
As she wrote the last words of this sentence, Hastie seemed to forget Diana's presence, and fell to brooding. Her beautifully moulded mouth and chin were set in lines that would have been bitter had they not been pitiful. The gaze of her dark, melancholy eyes went past, or through Diana's form, to dwell upon some picture called up by her arraignment of the younger girl's folly. She drew the tablet impulsively back and added: "You trusted to that strange, unstable, tide-shaken thing, the human heart," then held it forward to Diana, with that whimsical, enigmatic air with which one speaks a bit of Latin or Greek to a young child.

Diana's face flamed. "I was not!" she protested, "I never was. Why, there," she went on, piteously, "was my art. You were a great toast and coquette in your time, Hastie. You surely know what 'tis to lead a man on, and feign, and feign —"

Again the tapping of the pencil on the slate tablet, as Hastie wrote: "Truly I do. And I know, too, the face of a maid most desperately enamoured. Such a face you wore in those days."

As Diana made to interrupt vehemently, Hastie pencilled again, "Ah! Ah! Go to! Talk no more such folly — to me, at least. Why, you could not take your eyes off him."

"So I could not!" cried Diana. "I never lived in such anxiety. I was consumed with fear that he be told somewhat; and I continually dreaded he would misdoubt such eager and unmaidenly advances — from one so — so greatly his better every way. I dared not hold myself, as I really was, as I always had been; but must cheapen my favours, that I might be wed before Archie Cameron could hear that I was pining because he had jilted me."



II.
THE BOOK OF RETURNING

CHAPTER I.

THE END OF THE FURROW.

"OH, oh, if my young babe were born
And set upon the nurse's knee,
And I mysel' were dead and gone,
The green grass growing over me!"

DESPITE this plain speaking — because of it, perhaps — Diana remained two weeks at Wynnewoode.

The women talked often of Robert. Indeed, whatever subject was broached between them, it appeared to lead inevitably to some consideration of Diana's errant husband. And Diana's note sank and sank through the octave of passion, from that yell of rage and self-justification with which it had opened, down — down — down, to something very like the whisper of despair.

Hastie, who laboured under the several disabilities of being also a woman and a Chaters, of possessing a somewhat similar temper, and having done a somewhat similar deed, yet found it in her heart to pity the desolate young creature, when she finally came to make her adieus, faltering that she believed she would go back to Chaters House and interest herself in affairs there — indeed many matters, which had been somewhat neglected of late, called for her attention.

Arrived at her home, Diana found the walls still hateful to her. Every room had some message of Robert. The garden babbled of their courtship. Her very frocks, which hung upon their pegs upstairs, talked of this evening or that, and of certain turns in the lovers' affairs at which Diana was not willing to blame herself, yet from the contemplation of which she shrank as from a cautery.

Agnes was no poultice to her sore feelings in those days. Being of quite another temper, she had little comprehension or sympathy for this nature; and after a week's desperate trying, Diana announced the necessity for a visit on her part to the Sapelo plantation.

It was mid-April now. The sea was like a wimpling-glass of soft green, the breezes which came across it most sweetly welcome; and at Sapelo Diana was very delightedly received by her uncle. Gentle soul! he had, as he had said, no stomach for cruelty; and the mere sight of the cruelty of life to its victims, or of the sufferings which young, indiscreet creatures inflict upon themselves, filled his heart with ruth and his eyes with tears.

By the time she reached Sapelo, Diana's state was abject. It seemed that she neither ate nor slept; and she had, to her uncle's great uneasiness, taken up a habit of walking at the water's edge down upon the beach, at all hours, and alone. In fact, she was in those days debating whether a life so sadly marred as hers now seemed to be, was worth going on with. The outlook caused her woman's soul to cower and shrink back. The path which these last few weeks had opened to her careless, wayward

feet seemed almost too bleak and terrible for her to tread.

One evening, after their simple early supper, she tossed on a hooded cape, and with the usual formula to her uncle, "I will walk upon the beach for a little, before bedtime," hastened down to the shore. (She never moved slowly nowadays; life clung to her, a low fever whose morbid stimulus kept her heart beating unsteadily and fast, and timed her aimless movements to its quick pulsations.)

She fluttered up and down the level beach, wrapped in her dark cloak, a flitting shape against the sand's gray white. Suddenly she threw off the cloak, because it smothered her, walked half-way along her former course without it, turned and hurried back to it, a-cold. Thereafter she wore it, hugged about her; anon, with fronts thrown open; then carried upon her arm; then cast it by again altogether.

Near at hand, the reedy shores of small islands closed in to give seclusion to this bit of beach; but between them, to eastward, a way led out into the nebulous obscurity of the waste Atlantic itself. This beckoned Diana's sick fancy, as though it led indeed out of the bitter coil in which she had involved her life, — into solution, if it were no more than surcease, oblivion.

The sea lay out there. Vague, mysterious, compelling, it called to her. Somewhere in its great reaches her father and her brothers slept — with many others of their breed. Why should she not go to them now, and have an end? She sat down on the sand and drew her knees up, clasping them, and staring into the gray dimness. Her desolate gaze

voyaged desperately miles out across the ambiguous dark. Her head ached terribly. She was most weary of its aching; and with unconscious hands she undid all the fastenings of hood and hair, and let the long, dusk masses down about her, that they lay upon the glimmering sand. Sitting so, she lifted her face to the night. Out of its depths the waning moon rose late. It started up wildly, tragically, from the other edge of the world, and stared back at her, crepuscular, red, like a tear-swollen face. She laid her cold and aching forehead down upon her knees, that purely native attitude of grief in which savage man mourns. The soft airs took her hair; they tossed it forward and back. She sat immovable while the wild moon climbed almost half-way to the zenith.

It was characteristic of her bodily disorder, that she sank ever from febrile activity to the quiescence of death. And now she sat, not a living woman, a rock in the landscape, her long hair flowing idly about her upon the tides of the air, like trailing vine or moss.

Myriad small sounds of the water came to her ear, the speech of a quiet sea upon a smooth beach in the stillness of the night. It held, as in a solvent medium, the voices of a thousand past scenes; the rustle of rain on growing corn, the little crackle of a cosy winter's fire, the gentle stir and dropping in of its embers. There was the light slip and patter of daintily shod feet on dancing floors to the stroke and lapse of viols; then the sigh and whisper of long winds across great dry-grassed prairies; the murmur of whole universes of green

leaves, punctuated by the little lisping chirp of nestling birds.

Diana had written two weeks ago to General Oglethorpe. Unwilling to address her husband, yet desperately anxious that he should receive a communication which she now had to make to him, she had sounded the possibilities of the case by sending him a message through the general. But when Oglethorpe would have delivered this message, saying, carelessly, "Lieutenant Marshall, I have received a letter from your wife," the young man turned upon him and answered, slowly, "Sir, I have no wife."

Oglethorpe, remembering the affair in Charles Town, and reading finality in the squaring of that jaw, forbore to urge the communication upon the lad; and wrote in his letter to Diana of his inability to deliver it, though softening somewhat the manner of its rejection. In the course of his letter to her he said:

"Dear Mistress, I pray you examine truley your own conduct. This Brave Soldier of mine, and Honourable Gentleman, I have always known. 'Twas a most sweet and gentle lad, and even if overwrought to anger, yet still the first to be Reconciled; for he is as the brave ever are, truly Magnanimous, and incapable of any vindictive or revengeful spirit. Let my love for him, and indeed for you both, be my excuse if I venture to ask you to scan your Conduct to him. Have you borne yourself toward him as a Loving Spouse? Methinks if that you had, he would not so have spoken."

This letter it was — and the light which it threw upon the present state of her affair — that had

set Diana Marshall walking upon the seashore, and wondering if it were not better for this one last scion of the sea-going Chaters family to go home to that unquiet resting-place which held so many of her forbears.

The general, in addition to his communication, gave Robert Marshall a secret mission to Charles Town. It was to be performed in haste. "And yet," said Oglethorpe, avoiding his young subaltern's gaze as he spoke, "there would be time that you might put into Savannah upon a brief flying visit. A personal interview in — in trying circumstances, my lad — my dear boy — is often productive of much good."

"I shall not detain this message," Robert assured him briefly. "There is no matter whatever calling me to Savannah. I shall be glad to make such speed as is possible on your Excellency's behalf." But the general still hoped that, once within the vicinity, his messenger would be tempted to go in and speak with the young wife, whose offences were surely pardonable as he thought.

Nature, sought in any mood, brings good counsel. Diana rose from this last long watch of despair, and went home to the little hut where Sir Paris sat reading his Horace by the light of a myrtle candle or two, while poor sleepy Siska, who had replaced the absconding Junius, kept the night moths and mosquitoes at bay with a most unsteadily waved branch of flowering Judas-tree.

"Uncle," she announced, "I am going back to Chaters House; and I would beg you, if your plans here permit, to accompany me."

So gentle, so broken was her tone, that the alacrity

of Sir Paris's compliance with her request was almost comical. A few days later saw them installed at Chaters House.

Here, matters were somewhat better for Diana — because they could not well be worse. She had reached an apathy of misery. She had accepted her life as it was, but she lived it passively, without effort. She who had battled all her days, straining for this point or that, now drifted with the current — wayward, adverse — and let it take her where it would.

Agnes was both amazed and greatly distressed at the mistress's condition, and planned little surprises which were to arouse her from it. She asked Diana's advice on numerous small matters of household management, with the hope that she might even be contradicted or scolded. But there was always the same monotonous response, "Do as you please about it; it is nothing to me; I do not care; do not trouble me, Agnes. What was it you said? Oh! I did not hear you. You must excuse me."

So true was it that Chaters House took its tone from its young mistress, that it became in these days a house of mourning. Sir Paris remained much in his own room, reading, or was out with some gentlemen at supper of an evening, until he found that Diana missed him and would rather he remained with her, though often she scarcely spoke at all for an hour at a stretch. He fell into Agnes's habit of asking her little trivial questions to break these long, gray, terrible silences of hers.

One morning, pausing in the hall on his way out, he turned what tried to be a very bright face back

to her, asking cheerily, "And could I bring you aught from the store, Diana, my dear?"

"Nothing, thank you, uncle," Diana answered quietly. Then after a moment, just as Sir Paris reached and opened the door, she repeated absently, unconsciously, "I thank you."

Sir Paris turned hesitatingly as the words reached him, his eyes anxiously seeking her face. It was averted, gazing out upon the empty street with a fixed, desolate gaze. He stood there wistfully, too timid to speak. His eyes slowly filled. Putting his hand up to them, he went softly stumbling away, back to his own room.

But one night, having returned late from a wine supper at Colonel Ashburnham's, he found that there were things which could arouse his niece. He had gotten home — how, he scarcely recollected — and to his couch in such fashion as the inexperienced Siska could manage. Suddenly he sat up in bed in his elegant nightgown, its fine laces hanging down over his long, aristocratic white hands, and cried, "God o' mercy! What ever is't? What's to do? Who is murdered?"

His tall niece was shaking him violently, and crying out, "Who hath been here? Who brought you home? Who came with you, I say? Who hath been in this house? *Who — Who?* O God!" and the girl looked indeed like one on the verge of madness.

The old man sat up in the windy moonlight, and answered, as well as he was able for his niece's discomposing insistence, which took now the form of volleying inquiry, and again the shape of a constraining — almost a punitive — hand.

"Why, Diana, I had no more than usual — indeed, there was no drinking at the colonel's table as we used to consider drinking at home in London — there never is. There must have been more in the servant's hall, for Siska was thoroughly drunk. (Ah, I miss Junius. The rogue's head could stand a gallon.) And when I overtook a worthy man going my way, I joined myself to him, for safety and companionship, rather than trust an intoxicated black."

"You brought a stranger home with you! Was he tall or short? Did you see his face? Did you bring him into the house? Was he a soldier?"

"Lord, Diana!" demurred her uncle, "how can a man answer all your questions at once — waked up in the middle of the night to do it? I am chilled with this night wind. Hand me that dressing-robe, there's a good soul."

"The stranger!" Diana gasped, in her urgency almost pitching the garment at her uncle. "Has he been long gone? Did he ask of me?"

"Of you?" echoed the old gentleman, staring in surprise. "What should he know of you, my niece, to ask? He was a stranger in Savannah. The time is past, my beauty, when every new gallant must pay his tribute to your charms. You are a wedded wife now, Mistress Robert Marshall, and must hold yourself sedately," and he chuckled fondly.

Diana fairly groaned with impatience. "Was the stranger tall or short?" she repeated.

"Why — ah — yes, my dear, I think he was, rather tall. Or, stay! Not so tall, neither; indeed, you would, perhaps, call him short. I remember, he put me in mind of a couplet in Congreve's —

or perchance I am mistaken there; but you will know, when I quote it — ”

“ Yes, yes,” gasped Diana, “ another time, uncle, another time. The man’s voice — my God! — surely you would — did you note it at all?”

“ Why, the fellow spoke so low in his throat I could catch not above one word in three that he uttered. And when I reproached him with it, he said that he had forgot I was deaf!”

“ Oh, then,” cried Diana, “ he seemed to have known you!”

“ That did he not,” returned Sir Paris testily. “ Did I not tell you — did I not say he took me for a deaf man? Me! Me deaf!” She left him muttering to his pillow, “ Nay, nay. I am not deaf at all — if people only would not speak so low!” went back and stood where a great streak of moonlight painted white the spot upon which she had found a glove — the very cousin to that old riding-glove which Robert had, in going, dropped upon his chamber’s threshold, and she had picked up, and, for some reason which she could not then discern, kept by her.

She looked from the window out over the darkened lawn. The man who had brought her uncle home was no doubt a servant or private soldier to whom Robert had given a worn-out pair of gloves. If this were so, the man had seen him within a few days, and would see him again within a few more. Here was a channel by which communication might be opened — such communication as she now felt herself ready to make, and which she told herself passionately would not be refused.

She was not ready yet to send a humble acknowl-

edgment through General Oglethorpe. Nay, she would make her amends privately, but she would make them thoroughly. It was a generous heart which sent the hot blood through this child's body and tuned it often to outbursts of temper.

Below on the lawn, all glittering white light and inky pools of shadow, Robert stood and looked up at the window.

His boat had broken the blade of its rudder, and was halted for repairs at Skidaway. The craving to know how all went within this home had made him take the canoe and an Indian rower for a night trip, and slip into Savannah. By the merest chance, he had overtaken Sir Paris on the street; and seeing that gentleman's condition, and that he was accompanied by a new servant who would not recognise himself, ventured to address the baronet and bring him home to Chaters House. Sir Paris having much difficulty in mounting the steps, Robert had helped him even into the hall, and there dropped the glove, which was not in fact the mate of the one Diana carried, but fellow to another like it.

"O God! O God!" the girl moaned, clinging to the window-sill and looking out, "I am ready to give up. Pride—what is it? Life is too short for such bickerings. If he were only here, I would go on my knees to him. I would tell him"—a great tearless sob shook her—"if he knew all, he could not be hard with me."

Hungry eyes were questioning the house's front for they dared not say what. Under the shelter of the live-oaks Robert turned, and, with the heart in his breast crying out against it, pleading to stay,

to see, to speak, to hear, stole softly down to the water's edge where his canoe waited.

"What a poor fool a man can be!" he said to himself, piteously, as he got into the boat, "hanging about and gazing at the windows of a woman who has no more thought of him than of the broken fan she flung aside yesterday, or the rosette which did not please her fancy and was never worn."

He raised his brooding face from his two hands where it had been sunk and set it toward the sea. "There are things for a man to do in this world," he reasoned, "whether one woman loves him or no. I will take such counsel as I may from the life of our general. He is building for humanity, and seems to think nowhere of personal happiness."

He sighed heavily. "I wonder if he could have done so twenty years ago, had he been Diana's wedded and despised lover?" After that last, he closed his mind against repinings, and went forward on his journey.

And the tragic figure crept back from that window of Chaters House to lie till dawn, cold and trembling, upon a sleepless bed.

CHAPTER II.

THUNDERBOLT'S ANCESTRY

"THEY'VE come by ane, by twa, by three,
And whiles they rade, and whiles they rin.
But whan they won down to the rairin' sea,
Says, 'Ta'en alive I'll nevir bee,'
An' leugh in their faces, an' loupit in."

CHILD DAD BUCKALOO had spoken of his plantation on Cumberland Island, and the river, his main place of residence, on the St. Mary's down near St. Augustine — barely within the limits of the Georgia Province, and with the great Okefenokee swamp at its back.

Indeed, old Dad cared not under which king his indigo, corn, and tobacco grew, or his deer ran wild; for he was himself king of his own country, judge supreme of his own court, jury and priest, physician and pope of the whole tribe about him.

The place on the mainland, of which there now remains nothing but a trace of the massive tappy walls, — gone back to a gravelly looking ridge over which the wild vines scramble, — and some cypress piles driven into the bank where the landing was, presented in that day an appearance strangely mingled of civilised and savage occupation.

There was the house, low, rambling, walled with tappy and roofed with great cypress shingles split

from the log with helve and wedge. This stood upon a grassy bluff overlooking the river. Behind it was a mighty enclosure or stockade, walled about with tree-trunks sharpened and driven into the ground, and containing always a number of Indian tepees, as well as the sheds and buildings for his horses and cattle.

The plantation was noted for the superb tobacco raised upon it. The soil, the air, or the culture which it got, gave it a flavour superior to any in the region around. Dad's wife, Weeping Moon, was particularly expert in curing and handling it, and taught her skill to her Indian helpers.

Stately, grave-visaged old men, head-men of the Creeks or Catawbias, and caciques of more remote tribes, came to sit solemnly in the great, low-ceiled living-room and smoke in dignified silence. And a present of his tobacco was always a welcome one.

The great fields of blue-green plants with their pinky blossoms stretched along the rich, river-bottom land, and ran upward on the chalky hillsides where the more delicate leafage was obtained. That of the bottom-lands being rank and strong, served to make a sort of blend of which Weeping Moon knew the secret.

Great fields of the beautiful and generous Indian corn were there, too; and all was needed to feed the semi-royal retinue of retainers and guests which appertained to old Dad's state. This, with enormous droves of half-wild hogs, cattle which had been replenished from the wild cattle of the country, and a band of sheep, offered such plenty of food as permitted a baronial hospitality scarcely credible in those days.

Though holding no official position in the tribe, Buckaloo was regarded among the lower Creeks as in some sense a chief, and there were a number of families always attached to him in the capacity of guests, humble retainers, or even servants. These hunted and fished, worked fitfully in the corn-fields, and gathered the roots, berries, and fruits which the red men used as food.

The great table was never without its score of dark-faced, seldom-speaking guests; and the ungrudging hospitality which made his house as the house of a father, to his wife's kinsmen, gained their hearts as no other white man had ever gained them. Families came and set up their lodge in his doorway, lived there for a few days or weeks, or even years, and went their way unquestioned. They were welcomed and sped as though the house and its fields belonged to them.

The big black horse which won the quarter races for old Dad Buckaloo at Savannah had a history.

When, nearly two hundred years before that, De Soto's vast, lawless, picturesque train of Spanish cavaliers, gentleman-adventurers, and broken noblemen, served and followed by a fringe of hardy rascals, swept up from Florida working their way west, they took a course through the morasses and across the easily traversed savannahs of Georgia.

This mingled rout of noblemen, soldiers, and riff-raff carried with it the most credulous of beliefs, and sought, with a mixture of savage gust and infantile expectation, the baubles of fairyland. Treasure in this wild country; gold from the very sands of the sea; the frontier of the Great Khan's

empire; the fountain of eternal youth; — these were the fantastic beacons which invited them forward.

Insolent, cruel, rapacious, ruthless, coldly contemptuous of all life, thought, humanity that differed from their own; as indifferent to the sufferings their revolting barbarities inflicted upon a primitive people as are urchins to the tortures of the flies they dismember, they implanted a seed of hatred in the breasts of the red men from which the later settler reaped a plentiful harvest of blood.

This great caravan rode Spanish horses of the best strain and mettle, and brought with it cattle, swine, and sheep, with which De Soto's empire was to be stocked. Individuals of all these escaping, left in the country straying groups of shy, wild, swift sheep; sharp-horned, timorous-eyed, silent-footed wild cattle; wild hogs, fierce and lean; while the horses which survived and bred in their new environment were the wild progenitors of the fleet Chickasaw horses.

Famous among these in 1733 was a small bunch led by a great black stallion, worthy descendant of some old Spaniard's battle charger. Big and grand and fierce he was; mighty of bone and sinew, with a deep chest, a long barrel, a thin flank, and a speed which those who essayed to capture him declared to be unmatched. His high-borne head, and tail streaming like a black plume on the wind, suggested a courage, and his rolling eye bespoke an intelligence, that gave him supremacy and leadership among his kind. He came to be familiarly known (and dreaded by) the Indians and colonists, whose mares he lured away. His audacity and hardihood were inimitable.

He early learned to recognise firearms. If he were pursued while carrying away some new conquest, he never hesitated to turn and show fight, even making as if to attack the saddle-horses of his pursuers, striving to hold them while his prize should escape into his wild haunts. But let guns or pistols be out among the party, the keen rascal doffed his valorous aspect, and, once satisfied that his prize could not hold his pace and so make good their escape, he resigned her thereupon, and, with a final snort of disdain, a toss of the head and a flourish of the tail, was off, to preserve his own skin whole for other incursions and depredations.

This magnificent and intrepid creature came very naturally to be credited by many of both Indians and colonists with uncanny powers, and was variously called the Devil Horse, the Daft Horse, and the King of the Savannahs. The most popular view was that he was a little mad — very much as Alexander Buckaloo was mad, — with pride and egotism and inordinate vainglory.

Old Buckaloo himself at this time had a mare of high strain, of satin gaits, iron endurance, and bottomless staying power. She was a pure white, with the delicate skin, fine hair, large, lustrous black eyes, and affectionate temper of her Arabian forbears. Mistress Golightly had been reared mostly by Lit's hand. The old man, ever a shrewd judge and admirer of fine horse-flesh, had brought her home, a tender colt, from a trading-ship which had been blown out of her course, come to grief, and been glad to put in at Savannah, instead of turning back to Charles Town, whither she was bound.

Old Dad's horse-raising plantation was on the

island now called Cumberland, where General Oglethorpe had placed his garrison of Highlanders. Dad had established himself there back in the days when the advantages of these Sea Islands were known only to the Indians, and because the island was a safe place for horse-breeding, free from the interference of wild horses.

Then called Wissoo, or Sassafras, he had seen it change its name first, for the Spaniard, to St. Peter's, and again, for the English, to Cumberland; the latter name suggested by Toonahowi, to whom his Grace of Cumberland had given a gold repeating watch and shown many attentions during the young chief's visit to England. Buckaloo found it easy to harmonise with his Indian neighbours, and not difficult to agree with the Scotchmen, though they were Highlandmen and he a Lowlander.

It was upon his St. Mary's plantation that the horses bred on Cumberland were used; and when, in 1734, the dashing and adventurous King of the Savannahs stole this mare from this same plantation, the old man raised a tremendous outcry, and pursued with half a dozen hastily mounted Creek neighbours and relatives.

But this time the rescuers stood no chance whatever. For once, the great black had found a mate who could "gang his gait." The two ran straight away from all sight and sound of pursuit; they were never once within range of gun. And the delicate white head stretched keenly forward, rose and fell, relieved against the dark one beside her with its clouds of blowing black mane, as she held with him stride for stride.

Mistress Golightly was gone a year or more.

Then some Creek runners of Oglethorpe's, or some cattle-hunters, got sight of her — with a superb, high-headed, flying-hoofed, black colt beside her.

Word went to Buckaloo, telling him where to look for the white mare and her splendid progeny.

The party old Dad raised for this undertaking was the largest that had ever set out in pursuit of the black stallion. The horse was an Ishmael; every man's hand was against him. Scotchmen from Fort St. Andrew's on Cumberland Island; Salz-burgers and officers from Frederica; Englishmen from outlying plantations, and Dad's own people, the Creeks; all had been robbed by this high-handed gallant, and all rallied to the chase, eager to be in at his capture or death. And with them went every loose, roistering blade, every adventurous fellow not for the moment otherwise employed.

The hunt streamed out from Dad's plantation-house, where it had rendezvoused, at daylight of a gray November morning, with much noisy demonstration. They sighted the kingly black and his family — among them Mistress Golightly and her tall black colt — not far from the spot where she had first been seen. The sire gave warning, and the group started off far ahead of the hunters, the stallion keeping always in the rear, and between his charges and their pursuers.

As the hunters lay down to their work, as mile after mile was traversed at terrific speed, one and another of those with the black confessed defeat, lagged and lagged, to finally sheer out sidewise and drop back into the pursuers' rank.

Three times had this happened. Three times some mare was overtaken, identified, and her owner,

or some neighbour of his, left the chase leading the recovered animal.

Only the beautiful **Mistress Golightly** and her flying-hoofed colt held with the sire now. And of them, neither showed signs of flagging.

The black's course had lain principally across open country, and the whole crowd of hard-riding pursuers had long since declared that the only chance of getting mare and colt lay in shooting the stallion. But Buckaloo flew into a fury at the suggestion.

"Na! Nor ye'll na shoot him, neither!" he cried. "Shoot such a gamecock! Such a champion! A prince! A bully boy! A gallant! I give ye a' fair warning, the man dares lift a gun on him fa's next instant to mine!" and he flourished his great, bell-mouthed pistol expressively.

The **Mistress** now led the way — still at a killing pace — diagonally athwart the flank of Watchfire Hill, heading back toward the sea — which seemed strange, unless she were indeed circling instinctively round to that home on **Wissoo** where she had been reared. The black still kept his body between the pursuers and the mare and colt. Before the quarry lay the creek whose Indian name was **Tatchiquatchi**, swollen high by recent rains, running swift and strong.

The **Mistress** and colt took water first, and swam bravely; yet hardly they won through to the further shore, far down stream from where they struck out.

The big black stood quivering and stamping upon the hither side until they were seen to be past the fiercest of the current, and approaching the shore;

then sprang into the stream, and "God in heaven! Saw you ever such swimming?" cried Buckaloo's left-hand neighbour; for the great horse swam incredibly high. He seemed to ride half out of water like a crank boat, and his strokes sent him ahead like the propulsion of powerful machinery.

Midstream, he raised his head and neighed a fierce cheer to his mate and young on the further bank. A few more tremendous strokes, and he came lashing up out of the river, spurning the water from him in a cloud of spray, and the reunited group set off once more together, while the riders following them must seek for a ford above, and so lose more time.

Unnoticed in the excitement of the chase, the gray of morning had deepened, so that this notable chase ended in an afternoon of blowing rain.

Buckaloo was mounted on a big-boned gray, of fine wind and a staunch stayer. Of those who rode away from his own door beside or behind him at dawn that morning, not one now kept him company. And Buckaloo himself was on one of his roaring, hallooing sprees, drunk with excitement as ever man was drunk with drinking, gone back twenty years and more to his early pirate days.

Alone, he went thundering and clumping forward on the powerful gray — which had outheld everything on four feet — ranting, chanting, snatching off his bonnet, and shouting to the winds, with the drops gemming his flying black mane of hair and beard, his black eyes blazing in his uplifted white face, his nostrils spread, his teeth flashing in exultant smiles.

At the last, the horse — his mare and colt beside

him — was cut off upon a spit of land which ended in a piece of sea-cliff.

And Buckaloo was full and brimming mad. He was a roaring old sea-king of a thousand years ago. No superstition so ancient or so gross that he did not at that obscure, strange, lurid moment give it full-hearted faith.

On, on they went. The stallion — mare and colt still thrust ahead of him — took the small creek flowing around the hill at a leap, and mounted the slope with a stride yet unconquered. He paused, snorting, only at the cliff-edge; then wheeled with a rearing motion to face his pursuer, and lashed with furious, ineffectual heels at this ultimate barrier, the sea.

The gray was groaning like a toil-spent yokel. Buckaloo, leaving his back and leaping wide, unbattered to the black stallion standing against the sky, and began mouthing, grinning, and gesturing. He had long since flung reality from him, as one who flings off weight, and ridden forth into a strange, wild, vague land — oh, a brave land! — where he and the great horse were creatures of one race and one speech. He had sprung clean free of everything since birth, and was just a dominant brute, a highly evolved animal with a great imagination.

Holding a wary eye upon the rearing heifer with its fiery nostrils and rolling eyeballs, and the stamping fore-feet, Buckaloo went forward up the grassy slope, shouting bits of broken, bragging old Gaelic war-song.

And a horrified Salzburger fisherman on the beach below heard him, and vowed to the devil of his

death that it was not alone Buckaloo heard. At the wild stallion *answering in words*.

The scene that followed — and its strange ending — gave colour to this superstition.

Three men of Captain Mackay's Highland company, who had fallen out of the chase only from having lost the way, rounded a little hammock of palmetto and live-oak, and drew rein at the foot of the slope just as Buckaloo leaped from horse. Out of earshot, they saw, while the fisherman cut off from sight, heard. And the scene, split thus, reported through one sense by this one, and through another sense by those, was at once invested with additional weirdness, and had the better chance of becoming encrusted with apocrypha.

"Yon's a leid mon," whispered Donald Tyrconnell, leaning over his saddle-bow, and breathing hard.

"He's mad!" shouted young Kilmarnock.

"He's none so mad" grumbled the old Caith who had not spoken before. "He's none so mad — an' he'll live to do a power o' mischief yet. Look at yon!" as Buckaloo began his doffings and bowings and salutations.

"I have ever heard the man was a warlock," Tyrconnell whispered, half-convinced.

Then, as they gazed with shrinking, half-incredulous looks, came the ending of that scene which left Buckaloo with the name of warlock for ever fastened upon him — among the Scotchmen.

Seeing his pursuers at the foot of the slope, and that all hope was cut off, the big horse rolled a desolate eye upon the sea beneath him. He looked to the mare, turned his head to regard the figure

of the oncoming, shouting, gesticulating man, so that one would have said he understood the words.

What he did comprehend, what cowed his younger-brother understanding, what terrorised his lesser mind with its lesser lamp of reason, was the attitude of spirit which sent these words forth.

He was no longer feared! The courage of that accost daunted his own brave soul, and made him despair.

As Buckaloo topped the little hill, and drew near, the stallion suddenly rose in one mighty leap, and sprang far out to sea. They had seen when they crossed the Tatchiquatchi what a powerful swimmer he was; but now he sank, an inert black bulk, through the green waters, and was seen no more.

Left alone, the mare drooped her head, and, with the black colt trotting after her, came and stood at Buckaloo's shoulder.

The three sitting their horses at the foot of the slope looked in silence in one another's faces, up at Buckaloo and the two creatures standing against the sky, and without a word turned rein and rode for Fort St. Andrew's.

The black colt brought home with Mistress Go-lightly from this wild chase, then four or five months old, was, three years later, the horse who won Buckaloo the races at the Savannah Christmas Fair.

CHAPTER III.

AN ENCOUNTER

"To ride, to runne, to rant, to roare,
To alwaye spend, and never spare,
I wott, an it were the king himselve,
Of gold and fee he mote be bare."

BACK of the big enclosure at Dad Buckaloo's river plantation, the land to the westward fell away into depressions, swales, and marshes, making itself ready for the final drop into the great Okefenokee swamp.

These marshes were hopeless for the raising of any crop, though a good barrier against the approach of an enemy, and, in the season, a fair hunting-ground for snipe and curlew.

One day, about the middle of May, old Dad had been cattle-hunting there with a friend, none other than Captain Tillsford, who should have been with his command in Colonel Vanderdussen's regiment, but who found Dad's rum and company greatly to his taste, and having been sent out to purchase beef for his mess, remained to drink upon his own account. Both men had been drinking heavily when, in the dusk of the evening, almost at the door of Buckaloo's house, they met a pale, quiet young fellow, who had ridden down the Darien trail.

He hesitatingly asked for a night's lodging, and old Dad, whose hospitality, always expansive, became with sufficient potations boundless, was pleased to give it him.

The day was warm and muggy, a close, breathless evening, following a beating rain, and all three men were splashed from head to foot with mud. As they went into the long, low, dark room which served for kitchen, living-room, and bedroom, old Dad roared for Weeping Moon, and she came obediently from the outside where she had been at work. "Lit," he called next, and the girl descended from the loft above.

He cast himself into a chair, thrust forward both feet, bid his guests be seated and do likewise, and directed the women to pull off and clean their boots.

This performance, which smacked both of the white and Indian tyrant, did not seem to shock Lit. She received Captain Tillsford's somewhat ironical greeting with indifferent good humour. But when she discovered in the third man Robert Marshall, she had very nearly cried out, except that he gave her a warning look, and bent down to pull off his own boots by way of concealing his countenance.

"I will clean them myself," he said quietly. "'Tis not fit work for a woman."

Lit glanced apprehensively from her father and Tillsford to Marshall. She remembered now that the one meeting between her father and Marshall had been at the Christmas fairing, and observed also that the young man had been at some pains to change his appearance, wearing now his own hair and a moustache, while then he had been in a tie-wig

and clean-shaven. He was also out of uniform; and though her quicker woman's eye had not failed to recognise him, she judged that he preferred her father should not do so, and she on her part was very keen to keep him away from Tillsford. As she knelt at his knee reaching for the boots, old Dad rounded upon both of them with a bellow of laughter.

"'Tis so you young lads spoil the wenches!" he cried. "No, let her clean your boots for you — she'll love you for it. A kick into the bargain is sometimes not amiss, and seems oft to win a woman's affection when naught else will."

Robert made no motion of hearing his host's remark; but the quick-witted Lit turned to her father and said: "The man hath hurt his foot, it seems. I will dress it for him when he gets his boot off," and hurried back into the loft for bandages and salves.

This diversion gave her an excuse for asking him to come outside on the porch where she might have more light for the work.

Tillsford, who had just enough drink to make him quarrelsome, stared at the two as they passed out. "Why, 'tis a right accommodating fellow," he sneered, "and falls into his proper place quite easily. Having cleaned his own boots, no doubt he will go further and clean the boots of the *gentlemen* present." Tillsford raised his voice and sent these remarks after the retreating pair as a sort of challenge; but Marshall appeared not to hear them, and neither reddened nor paled.

"You are in the wrong box," Lit breathed to him, as she knelt to dress an imaginary hurt upon his

foot. "There is a fellow about here — Good God! Lieutenant Marshall, turn your face away — hide it as though in pain. There, is that better?" she inquired, in a raised voice.

Robert heard steps upon a small back passage, and at Lit's whisper, "Look," withdrew his fingers somewhat, and saw Junius, grand in the uniform of a Spanish colonel, just entering the house by a side door.

"This is no place for you," she whispered. "My father" — she choked a little on the word — "my father will break with these men, I think. He would not let them hurt you, but that black fiend is not to be trusted — and oh! you must go to your horse and away — my father's wife least of all," and she rose to her feet, deftly turning Robert with his back to the doorway, as Weeping Moon came to the door for a long survey.

Later, when she had told her father that the man would go on, and that she had offered to take Salequah with her and set him in a trail which he desired to follow, old Dad was too drunk to make objection.

Once safely out on the trail, Robert informed Lit that he had come up to find, if he could, what delayed a certain party of Creek warriors, and that, knowing his nearness to Buckaloo's plantation, and trusting in the old man's fidelity, he had ridden in without caution. He added that, though he could hardly say why, he was glad when he found himself unrecognised by Dad. And all three riders looked embarrassed, and went ahead in silence for a time.

"And what did you learn of the Creeks?" Lit finally asked.

Robert told her that he had been able, so far, to learn nothing of them; and as he dared not remain longer, was returning to General Oglethorpe, who lay encamped upon the St. John's awaiting the rest of the promised troops from Charles Town. He earnestly charged Lit that, if she could come by any word of these much needed Creek warriors, she go with it, or send a trusty messenger, to Cumberland, whence it would be immediately sent to the general by runners.

Lit set forth to him faithfully all she knew of the nearness or the movements of the Spanish. Then with a smile she laid her hand on the boy's shoulder. "I have but one warrior whom I can confidently promise the general," she said. "Here, Lieutenant Marshall, is a man whose heart is with his father's people."

The child looked with big, soft, grave eyes from one to the other. He evidently saw no jest in the matter, and said, quietly: "I will do anything I can now; and when I am old enough to lead a war-party, I will take them to the general, and fight beside him."

"And what is't about the black, Junius?" inquired Robert.

Lit told him that the negro had appeared at the plantation about three days before. Her father claimed to be treating with him for purchase of certain lands which Dad had always used for pasturage, and which were now within the Spanish lines.

"I scarcely think he would have known me as I now am," Robert said. "I saw him not above

a half-dozen times. He fled within the first week of my arrival at Chaters House."

Riding onward with the tired young fellow under a faint new moon, Lit began after a time to question him about Diana; and she gathered from his replies, halting, pained, and unsatisfactory, that the thing which any who knew the inside history of that match must have anticipated, had come sooner than she had looked for it.

Arrived at the parting of their ways, she reached a hand to him in her own boyish fashion. "Good-bye, Lieutenant Marshall," she said. "That is an honest hand. I am half-Indian — or so my father says — but believe me, sir, General Oglethorpe has not a more loyal friend than I would be to him and to his cause. For my father —" Her voice again faltered on the word. "Well, you have seen what you have seen, and of it you know as much as I do."

"Who was the officer?" Robert suddenly inquired, as though only now bethinking himself of it. "I did not see his face at all."

"A Carolinian," Lit replied cautiously. "There is no harm in that, sir. He is there for to buy beef. He knows naught of my father's — of Junius. I more dread harm going to Captain Tillsford than any coming from him."

"Tillsford?" Robert straightened himself in his saddle. "I must go back," he said. "That will not do."

"Nay," remonstrated Lit, "the man is too drunk by now. He would do naught but quarrel with you. Leave me to manage it. No harm shall come to him."

And when the young lieutenant rode away, after making definite arrangements with the girl as to where she might be met by Oglethorpe's emissaries desiring information, and carrying her promise that if anything of importance became known to her, she would herself go to the fort on Cumberland with the information, Lit's eyes followed him mournfully, almost reprehendingly.

"My poor dear!" she said, "my poor dear lady! I know well her heart is sore. Oh, I must go to her and see how all fares with her!"

CHAPTER IV.

FORT MOOSA

"THE foe cam' i' the nicht an' rain,
I' the dark hour just before the dawn;
Bot or ever the castle gates were tane
Full many a soul to Christ was gone."

BEFORE Robert left the camp on the St. John's the Carolina troops had come up, and most of the Indians had joined them at the rendezvous. The artillery, which was brought down in the ships-of-war, *Flamborough*, *Phoenix*, *Squirrel*, *Tartar*, *The Spence*, and *The Wolf*, was landed at the mouth of St. John's.

Runners were sent from the Uchee towns to the Indian allies to inform them of the contemplated demonstration against St. Augustine, and to beg that their warriors be poured immediately into the garrisons at Frederica and Fort St. Andrew's. There was already with the general a very considerable band of Indians, led by Molochi, son of Prim, the late chief of the southern Creeks; Raven, war-chief of the Cherokees; and Toonahowi, who filled Toma-chi-chi's place, and led the banished men of the Creek nation.

About the time of the concentration, the garrison at St. Augustine was materially reinforced by the

arrival of six splendid half-galleys, manned by two hundred regular troops, and armed with long, brass nine-pounder guns, and two sloops loaded with provisions. Whose fault it was that these should have been allowed to steal through Matanzas Inlet and make the Bay of Augustine well-nigh impregnable, is scarcely worth inquiring. The Carolina Assembly, in a subsequent investigation of the matter, stated that the naval commanders promised much for this expedition — and did nothing; which indeed would seem to have been the case, for surely there was no efficient blockade, when a garrison which they hoped to take by assault was permitted to receive these large additions to its forces; and a town which, the assault failing, they hoped to starve into submission by siege, was allowed to receive two sloop-loads of provisions.

There had never been any hope of taking St. Augustine from the landward side unless the men-of-war who accompanied the expedition could make a demonstration to the seaward; either actively assisting in the destruction of the fortification, or drawing its defenders from that portion of the wall which the land force assaulted.

Shortly after the middle of May, General Oglethorpe, with a land army numbering over two hundred regulars, militia, and Indians, moved upon St. Augustine. There was a small fort, an outpost on the North River, about two miles north of St. Augustine, which lay directly in his path. It is called in the old chronicles "The Negro Fort," because it had been built there for the defence of the negroes in hunting cattle and horses. A fortified line, a considerable portion of which may still be

traced, extended from it to the stockade on the St. Sebastian, while communication with St. Augustine was had by a tide creek through the marshes to the castle itself.

This fort the general took, burned its gates, and caused three breaches to be made in its walls. Then, on the fifth of June, everything being placed, Sir Yelverton Peyton, commodore of the sea forces, Colonel Vanderdussen, who was in charge of what might be termed the coast attack, and the general to the landward side, had agreed upon a signal; but that signal being repeatedly given, and no response coming from land or sea, Oglethorpe was obliged, to his great mortification, to withdraw his forces and fall back. And at Fort Diego Robert found him.

The contemplated assault was now to be converted into a siege. There had been a council of war, and the ships lying off the bar at St. Augustine were directed to maintain a rigid blockade. Colonel Palmer, with the rangers, ninety-five Highlanders and forty-two Indians, was left near the ruined fort of Moosa, with instructions to scout the woods incessantly on the land side, and intercept any cattle or supplies coming from the interior. It was growing intolerably hot for the men of the North in this climate; many were sick, and all discouraged with the present face of affairs.

"What was the state of matters here on the coast?" Robert asked of Colonel Vanderdussen.

"I give you my word," the officer replied, "I was never so near cutting my own throat for pure spleen, as when I consulted with Captain Pearce after that our forces were gone inland with Oglethorpe to attack, and he said to me that the galleys and half-

galleys of the Spanish (which, the Lord knows, if our ships had been worth the powder wherewith they might have been blown up, would never have been let to come through Matanzas Inlet) — he says to me, sir, mind you, that these galleys were ‘moored in the bay in such wise as made it inconvenient, if not dangerous, for him to attack them!’ ”

“Did he know these facts before the general left?” inquired Robert.

“Know them!” cried the colonel. “What other could he expect than that the enemy would dispose of his forces in the very best fashion for defence? Did he suppose they liked us well enough to leave us an open channel? I asked him, then, would he let Captain Warren go in with smaller craft; and while he said their pilots told him the undertaking was quite too hazardous, he answered to my proposition that the thing might be done, if there were swash enough beside the galleys for to support our boats. And, after all, when I was in frenzy enough to have swam the bay and my men with me, the thing falls through; back comes the general, and we are booked for a siege, which, God knows, we have neither cannon nor forces nor supplies to maintain — and the commodore telling us at the last council of war held that his ships ‘must be away from these coasts by the fifth of July, for the fear of hurricanes!’ — the *fear* of ‘em!”

It was to this devoted band at Fort Moosa that Robert’s next mission was given him. It had been planned that the general would come up, within five days of leaving them there, on the fifth of June. Matters having developed in such a way that this could not be, Robert was sent with a communication

to the commanding officer. He was directed to seek the command anywhere on the narrow spit of land where the fort stood, for that they had been instructed to change camp nightly lest the Spanish attack them.

Riding as far as he could, he finally got down and took to the creek way, which would have led him past the fort and on to Augustine. Arrived at the dismantled fort, he found the command had made camp there, delivered his letter, and, spent with three nights of scouting, which had been mostly passed in the saddle, lay down to sleep.

The heat was frightful, as though a storm impended. There was a wind abroad, but it was a land breeze, hot and sickly. It rustled the great leaves of the palmetto royal; it filled the foss of the fort, and brought clouds of stinging gnats with it. As he lay, with his head upon his saddle, the sleeping garrison all about him in the open ground of the fort, which had within its breached walls a house, a well, and some recent attempts at huts made by the present occupants, he looked up to the great white stars, and his own troubles flowed back upon his heart in a tide so deep and bitter as to wash out all thought of present danger, or dissatisfaction with the present situation of affairs. Again he and Diana were sitting in the garden outside the window of Chaters House, listening for the mocking-bird which was never to sing for them. These were the same stars that had looked down that night, and the whole world — his world — had gone under since then.

Hugh MacKay, second in command under Colonel Palmer, had told him very kindly that, though

they beat to arms at three o'clock every morning, fearing an Indian attack, and knowing that such attacks were always made just before dawn, he was not to be disturbed thereby, as he would be roused, when necessity was, by MacKay himself. So that having found some uneasy slumber, the roll of the drum did not entirely waken him, but he turned again on his arm and slept.

After the disturbance of the call to arms, there was a lull. The wind still whispered languidly in the palmetto leaves. A little bird had speech with her mate. About the fort there was a stealthy-footed movement that was not the wind. Some presage of coming trouble caused one or two of the garrison who had relapsed into sleepy inactivity to rouse themselves.

Suddenly a horse neighed out in the thicket near the fort, and then all was confusion. It was four o'clock. The dawn was finally beginning to lighten. A detachment of five hundred from the garrison at Augustine had assaulted the fort. There were a few Spaniards among them, but they were mostly negroes and Indians, with a party of horse drawn up and lining the path, that none of the besieged might escape.

There came a rattling fire from the small arms of the attackers. Robert was on his feet. He belonged to no command, but he ran to Ensign Hugh MacKay, who had rallied his Highlanders at the gate of the fort.

"Colonel Palmer is down," MacKay said to him, as he came up. "My God! man, you need something other than a small sword," and he thrust a pistol into Robert's hands.

The enemy were coming up to the gate in an uneven, ragged body, the Indians yelling, a negro or two running, bending low to avoid the fire of those within the fort. Suddenly Robert saw the uniform of a Spanish colonel, and at the next turn recognised Junius.

It appeared, from the direction of the bullets which sang and whistled about them, that the fort was attacked on all sides. Yet, as the hopelessness of their resistance began to be borne in upon them, the overwhelming number of those who had come against them being understood, a few men leaped through the breaches toward the creek side and scrambled between the prickly palmetto down into the water which, leading them to the river, held out some hopes of escape.

The Highlanders with their broadswords bore the onset of the closer attack; and so fierce was their reception of the enemy that the charge wavered and drew back. So the fight clenched and released, again and again, staggering back and forth, now on this side, now on that, for upward of an hour. Many of those within, as Captain MacKay says in his private letters, "were very ill wounded, and twenty killed."

The chief officer being among those who fell first, Captain MacKay thought it time to retire. He was able, so effective had been his teaching of those who led the latter assaults, to draw off in full sight of the enemy. It was clear day now; they could see each other. And, covered with wounds and glory, the little remnant of the devoted band were permitted to retire without being pursued. These were the white men. The Indians, following

their usual methods of warfare, fled in different directions when the attack was given up.

Captain MacKay says in speaking of his being permitted to draw off without pursuit, that it was because they had "sadly mauled the enemy," as he found afterwards that there were two hundred of the attackers killed, as against twenty of his men. John Moore MacIntosh of Darien was taken prisoner.

When finally the little band got to the water's side, where Lieutenant Cadogan, who chanced to come down the river, took them all in and landed them upon Point Quartell, where the Carolina regiment was, Hugh MacKay found to his great distress that Lieutenant Robert Marshall was among the missing.

After the massacre at Moosa, as it may well be called, the history of the St. Augustine expedition declined to a most painful close. The last feeble effort was agreed upon on the twenty-third of June. Captain Warren, with the boats from the men-of-war and the two sloops hired by General Oglethorpe, and the vessels which Carolina had sent with their militia, had agreed to take the Spanish half-galleys in the harbour at a given signal, and the general was to attack the trenches.

This was a desperate measure. The whole of the troops belonging to the besiegers, including even the seamen, were greatly inferior in numbers to the garrison. The town was covered by the castle of Augustine, with four bastions and fifty pieces of cannon; and from it ran an entrenchment to Fort Coovo, on the River Sebastian, which entirely pro-

tected the town from the batteries on Anastasia Island.

But for this plan Oglethorpe drew in all the strength that he possibly could, sent for the garrison that he had left at Diego, and was joined by reinforcements of Creek Indians. He made a number of fascines and short ladders, provided all other necessities for taking the entrenchment, brought up thirty-six cohorns — and then received notice that the commodore had resolved to forego the attack, declaring that the season of hurricanes was fast approaching, and that he judged it imprudent to hazard his Majesty's ships any longer upon the coasts!

With the departure of the fleet, a sort of despair fell upon the forces. The general himself was ill of a fever; and on the fourth of July everything concerning the expedition was reëmbarked, and the whole army began its return march, or voyage, for Georgia and Carolina.

As he lay ill at the island of St. Simons, Oglethorpe wrote to Diana: —

“MY DEAR CHILD: — I have to Acquaint you with very heavy News. Your Beloved Husband, Lieutenant Robert Marshall, is among those missing after the Massacre at Moosa. But pray, my dear young Friend, be not more disquieted about this News than I am; for I assure you we have no intelligence of his Death, and a very lively hope that he is yet among the Living. I myself re-took Moosa, where we buried the Dead, and found not his body among them. Many of our Indians who were taken Prisoner in the attack on Moosa were

permitted by their Captors to depart in Peace, that the Spanish might thereby curry favour with the Creek Nation. These tell me that John Moore MacIntosh, of the Highlanders and of Darien, and several other white men, are Prisoners in the Castle of Augustine, if they have not already been sent to Madrid, as was the plan when these Creeks left Augustine. It is almost certain to my mind that of these men your Husband is one; and I am making, and shall make, such efforts as will not only discover to us his Whereabouts, but shall hope to make those which will bring about his Restoration to his Friends.

"I am ill, at this writing, of a Fever. But that will soon pass, and I hope to have brave News for you when I see you once more. Despite many distressful Happenings, our Armies have not been without Victory in this Expedition.

"Commend me to your respected Uncle, and believe me,

"My dear Madam,

"Your most devoted

"And most Ob'dt.

"Humble Serv^t. to command,

"JAMES OGLETHORPE."

CHAPTER V.

THE NAMING OF A MAN-CHILD

"O WHATNA name s'all my child bear?
Says, 'Gie'm his father's name
Or his father's father's name to wear
To carry on their fame.'
Nay, nay, my little son's name s'all be
A name s'all speak The Word for me."

THERE was a quiet-footed tumult abroad in Chaters House. Diana's room was closed, and Sir Paris, cast into the outer darkness of the corridor, walked up and down in an anguish of helpless sympathy.

The shrewd attrition of the past few months had worn upon the baronet physically, but left the spirit polished and gleaming forth in wonderful radiance. Now, he caught Agnes, or Hastie, or Lit, privileged beings, as they came from the fateful chamber, and put tremulous questions to them.

"Thank God! Oh, thank God! for James Oglethorpe's brave kindness to a persecuted people," he groaned, as Hastie communicated to him by her tablets that Diana was quite safe, she thought, in such competent hands as those of Doctor Nunis. "Had he turned back these Hebrews, and sent them from our coasts, as even the charitable trustees

demanded, where would our poor girl have been now, without this skilled man to attend upon her?"

Suddenly, through the hush which followed his words, there pricked that cry, tiny and strident, which is like none other. Sir Paris went flat against the wall, supporting himself with backward-spread hands, regarding Hastie with piteous dilated eyes, and lips as mute as her own. In that moment the silent lady was a poor comforter; for she could not stop to pencil the hasty word which another woman might have flung over her shoulder as she fled.

There the poor baronet remained, scarce daring to breathe, or to so much as withdraw a finger from the wall behind him, for all the world like an owl on a barn-door. To this figure of Apprehension came out presently the bright-faced, scholarly old physician, offering a kindly hand, and saying, "I am come to congratulate you, Sir Paris. God has remembered His daughter in exceeding mercy and kindness. Unto her a son is born, and unto us a man-child this day. 'Tis a beautiful fine nephew you have." Sir Paris could have fallen on the gentle Jew's neck and wept for pure relief and gratitude.

Inside that chamber, Diana lay, for the first time in her life, with every fibre of her body and soul at peace, and in harmony with all the rest of the universe. She had been coming toward this great revolution of motherhood—the Chaters women were all born for maternity, and gloried in it, and made it glorious—and now, when her son was laid on her arm, she felt that all the days before this day had been mere uncounted moments of preparation. She found at once the answer to all questions, the

solution of all problems of her life. Lying with half-closed eyes, she seemed almost asleep, one of the women moving softly about the room; but there pealed, echoing through all the corridors of her being, such a great Te Deum of thanksgiving, joy, and praise, as only the angels know the continued sound of.

The little helpless form at her side lay still, and sent forth, silent and unseen, a might invincible. She felt it come upon her, a confidence audacious and divine, a puissance that nothing could daunt. She felt that with the child in her arms — for his sake — she could defy the universe — No, not defy it, love it all; and so, vanquish it.

Toward Robert, it had been long since she felt the slightest anger. Now, her own bliss brought a great rush of tenderness for him. In this quiet time, when her life lay spread before her mind's eye like a map, the future, too, all covered with a sweet, golden haze of anticipation showing faintly before that eye, she recalled — yet without pain — how ill she had treated the baby's father. Ah, yes! That, with all other sorrows, would be healed. Nothing — nothing could be withheld from her to whom so much had been given.

After a long sleep, (and she could not be sure whether it had lasted through the night or merely some hours of the day,) she waked, and found Sir Paris sitting beside her in Lit's place, holding her hand. As she opened her eyes, he lifted the hand and kissed it; then bent over and kissed her upon the brow.

"I waited for you to wake," he said gently, "that none but you should show me the baby's face.

You were both sleeping so sweetly that I would not suffer any to disturb you."

As Diana reached over, and with fingers suddenly grown skilful, uncovered the little face beside her, Sir Paris went down on his knees that he might examine it the more closely.

"A fine boy," he said, with an air of experience. "Why, Diana," as the child puckered its tiny features in sleep, "he hath Robert's dimples."

The mother laughed a little gurgling laugh. "He is all dimples for a while yet," she said; "but I do believe it, uncle. His eyes are very dark now, but they will be blue like Robert's, not gray like mine."

"And the name?" Sir Paris went on, a little ruefully. "I had hoped that you might call him 'Hector'; but of course you are wholly set upon the name of Robert."

"No," Diana returned, "I got my name for him last night, or — all times do so swim together with me now — at least, it came to me half-waking and half-sleeping. It is not Robert."

"Nor Hector?" put in Sir Paris timidly.

"No," she repeated, with her old frankness grown very winning. "You know, as well as any one, dear uncle, why I should give such a name to the baby; I have decided to call him 'Return.'"

Sir Paris glanced at her with quick comprehension, and gently nodded; then leaned back in his chair and regarded the baby with the eye of a connoisseur. "'Tis a request — or a command — no man could resist," he said, smilingly.

After quite a long silence, "Uncle," spoke Diana, "were you beside the bowling-green at Colonel

Ashburnham's when I won the little cup from Robert? — the silver porringer, you know."

Long and softly Sir Paris laughed, and struck his hand upon his knee, and cried, "There! It unravels itself like a play — oh! and in a most romantical fashion."

Diana, too, smiled. "Bring the cup, Agnes — please you. It stands always on the little table in my dressing-room. There," she continued, lifting it and turning it, "upon this side are the names of Robert's father and grandfather; and on this — see? — is his own. And I would have the baby's name — only the one word, 'Return' — put just here, above it."

"'Return Robert Marshall,'" murmured Sir Paris, taking the cup, and tracing with his forefinger the position of the new engraving. "Aye, that will he, my girl. He will surely come back to you. We have most monstrous encouraging news, which I was not allowed to tell you for fear 'twould be too exciting. It seems your faithless Chunkey (who decamped with my renegade Junius) would go out of her way to oblige one who certainly showed her more kindness than she deserved. James Oglethorpe writes me that he hath, at second-hand from this strange being, a message which leads him to believe that Robert, upon being captivated at Moosa, was taken directly to Augustine. Whether there still, or gone to Madrid, 'tis sure that by getting hold of this girl some trace may be obtained. And is not that grand news for our little man's christening day?"

A week later Sir Paris sought a timid permis-

sion to bring Belinda in and formally present her to the heir.

"Best put it off," Diana laughed; "she will not like him, uncle. Fettered animals ever feel a distaste for infants; a jealousy, too, I suppose, poor things."

"Distaste? Jealousy?" echoed Sir Paris, sternly. "It would be better for her that she display no such — sentiments or — or — emotions as that in my presence."

"Why, uncle," Diana remonstrated, "'twould not be strange that she should even snap at him."

"Snap at him!" cried the baronet, aghast. "If such a thing as that occurred, I give you my word, Diana, between Belinda and myself everything will be at an end. I would support her to the close of her days," he added, magnanimously; "but countenance her, I would not."

With this appeared the awkward Siska bearing Belinda. The baby, who was awake, and moving his hands about in what Sir Paris considered a very remarkable fashion, was presented for her observation. At first, she resolutely turned her head away and looked through the window. Being sternly desired by her master to bring her vision to bear upon what was before her, she turned and swept a gaze of sick disgust over the small, helpless, contemptible intruder, with his preposterous complexion.

Sir Paris was humiliated, but not entirely discouraged. He thought it worth while to make one more effort, before having her removed in disgrace; and asked that the child be laid upon his knees, so that she might understand the necessity of loyalty to it.

The women now were standing about watching

the performance with varying expressions of amusement and interest. With his usual precision and delicacy in handling any precious thing, Sir Paris lifted the tiny swaddled figure and laid it caressingly upon his knees.

"See," he said to the small dog, who stood before him on a cushion, watching angrily while this new pet usurped her carelessly held position. "Behold, Belinda. This is your young master, whom you must love now, and so soon as he can speak and tell you what he desires, must serve and obey him."

Belinda stood upon her hind feet, wrinkled her little black nose, sniffed at the baby's long skirts; and finally sealed her own doom by first growling and then snapping at these sacred draperies.

Sir Paris rose, laid Return down gently, but with an air of great finality. "That decides the matter," he said, definitely. "You have settled your own case, Belinda."

"O, no, uncle," laughed Diana, "do not be too hard upon the poor dog."

"Give her a cuff and let her remain," suggested Lit. "I warrant in a month's time she will love the baby."

"Nay," concluded Sir Paris. "Siska, take the dog up and carry her away." It was done, Belinda riding out on Siska's arm, wearing a look of contemptuous unconcern. After she was gone, her discarded master added, conscientiously, "I will see that a good home is found for her, but here she cannot remain."

Belinda, still mortifyingly indifferent, was indeed placed in a home of less affluence and of no aristocratic pretensions, but apparently much more to her

liking. Here, she later justified Sir Paris's evil opinion of her by treating him not only as a rank stranger, but as an unacceptable candidate for her acquaintance.

She put the finishing touch to his dark belief when, some twenty months later, Sir Paris passed her new residence, little Return staggering valiantly beside him, clutching his finger. The baronet — full of love and ruth for all creatures for the baby's adored sake — hesitated for an instant before Belinda, occupying a cushion on the doorstep; whereupon she raised a cold, repelling glance to the usurper, and bared her teeth in what we may charitably hope was a sneer, but Sir Paris declared, so long as he lived, was a ferocious snarl.

But now, at the door, Sir Paris turned back. "O, the porringer, my dear. I have found an excellent good silversmith among the Salzburgers, and will have that name put on if you will permit me."

This peace and glory which now came to Diana and to those about her, as a sudden revelation — she had built it from day to day, back in her time of despair, when she was struggling up out of that pit which herself had digged, not willing to live, hardly ready to die; only, at the end of very dreary effort, winning to a ground where she felt she could take a wrecked and ruined life and make the best of it.

She had been learning to love not only Robert, but all humanity, during these long hours when, for the first time in her life, she had sat and sewed; when her uncle had so pitied her that all the slight grudge which his gentle nature could hold was



washed away in the flood of his commiseration. In those days she went back continually over their brief courtship, and lived through it — saw it all from another view-point, and this view-point the real. Stripped of the strange, fictitious emotions which she herself had wound about it, she found that she had in reality loved Robert from the first. She saw him in all the exigencies of that time, beautiful, well-bred, charming, staunch and underlying as a rock, and most lovable and desirable.

Freed from that self-deception, that hypnotism of a single idea, which had kept her from seeing and feeling these charms at the time, they now came back to her remembrance with all their invincible power; and in this wonderful late blooming of her love, this rich flower of her own feeling toward him, it seemed to her impossible that he should not be loving and seeking her.

There is a dignity physical, a bodily poise and seemliness which may persist while the uneasy spirit goes posturing and begging an alms of attention. This anomalous condition had ever been Diana's, but was hers no more. She had emerged into the realities of life. Back of her native physical dignity, there was now a dignity of soul as great.

One day, as Diana and Lit were sitting under the live-oaks on the lawn, watching Little Return, now nearly two years old, as he strove to toss up and catch a monster orange which his great-uncle had brought him, Diana cried out so suddenly and sharply that Lit ran to the child, thinking some harm had befallen him.

"No, no! Leave him alone! Look at him — the picture, Lit, the picture!" the mother cried.

Lit drew back and regarded the child for a moment; then some position which his baby hands took upon the great yellow ball between them, some turn of the small, capped head above, touched a chord of remembrance, and she laughed out. "Surely, surely," Lit agreed, coming back to her seat on the grass at Diana's feet, "his like enough for a picture of his very self instead of —"

Diana's musing voice broke in upon her speech, "It is most strange and wonderful to me," she said, "that I should have been so moved by a picture that is the very portrait of this my child, and thought I had a memory of such a face, when I did look upon it. Can memory really work backward, think you, Lit? Was it a prophecy instead?"

Lit laughed, and looked up at her fondly, "Is't possible," she asked, "that with all my gabble — and I talk continually when I am with you, Mistress Marshall; the Lord knows my Indian blood doth not show there — is't possible that I never told ye how that miniature was Lieutenant Marshall's? 'Tis strange you should never have seen it amongst his belongings."

Diana went to the boy, caught him up, and scanned every feature. "If I had needed a proof," she said, at last, softly, "that my marriage to Robert was ordained by Heaven, I have it here. I have never thought about that little picture without a strange tugging at my heart-strings. And so, 'twas Robert's face. His mother looked upon it and loved it, even as I thce, heart's treasure," and she covered Return's cheeks with kisses.

Robert's papers and private belongings, left behind and sent to Chaters House, had never been opened.

To do so, and assort them, would have been to confess that their owner would never return to perform the task. But Diana now commissioned Lit to look among them for the miniature, and when it was found and displayed upon the mantel-board in the parlour, it was a frequent subject of jest that many guests took it for the portrait of Return, and asked why so quaint a costume had been chosen for it.

CHAPTER VI.

THE CAMERON'S DEFEAT

"AND whatna hold s'all we draw to,
My merry men and me?
We will up an' gae to the house o' the Rhodes,
To taunt that fayre laydye."

A LITTLE lonely child, a sturdy, fair-haired boy of two, not yet out of frocks, playing in a great, gloomy, still room, with a quaint primer and a big old black-letter Bible, whose strange, gruesome pictures are a source of mingled horror and delight. Suddenly the door opens, and a woman's face looks in, a mother's face, instinct with the majesty of motherhood and womanhood from the broad, fair brow and direct, honest gray eyes, to the sweet, serene lips and softly moulded chin.

"Return," she says, smiling indulgently, "I have made a soldier's cap for thee — come, my son; leave the books; remember thy father is a soldier. Come and learn the art of war."

In the two years since the birth of her child, Diana had heard no word of that child's father. A nature less high-couraged would have broken down under the strain. The times were so troubled, the chances of war so various, that there was left

some colour for the hope others expressed to her; but she saw no warrant whatever for the confidence with which she accepted these assurances.

Aside from the matter of Archibald Cameron, Diana had been a spoiled child of destiny, and even that catastrophe might be called a doting nurse's cuff on the ear. How was it possible for her to conceive that she might be made to share the common lot of bereavement and denial; and that, too, when she had just come to realise the treasure she once possessed in her husband's heart and her own powers of loving?

Diana glozed no ugly feature of what she had done. She looked back with honest eyes. She weighed with honest hands. Yet she felt that, whatever the fault, whatever the bitterness it had wrought, a woman once loved, a wife, is very strong when, repentant, a tender suitor, she can say, "Come back to me." And she knew that when that crown of motherhood has descended upon her, when she pleads the reuniting of that holy trinity, father, mother, child; when the wife's outstretched arms are a mother's arms too, and she can say, "Come back to us," then she is irresistible.

Big-brained, big-hearted, Diana Marshall was the timber of which heroic mothers of great men are hewn. Her wealth had been poured out willingly to aid Oglethorpe in the defensive war; more freely still to set on foot fruitless inquiries for Lieutenant Robert Marshall, who had never been seen after the taking of Fort Moosa. With a legitimate channel in which her fiery energies might flow, the fretted current of Diana's life attained the placid dignity of a mighty river. She no longer fought imaginary

battles, for there were great barriers of reality to be beaten down and overpassed. She was indeed greatly come into her kingdom; but not entirely so, for she still felt, with a touch of the old Diana, that motherhood made of her a throned empress, and that Robert, though in her loving heart she now called him king, must come eagerly back to an adoring vassalage.

And while she waited in happy confidence for Robert to come back, her household and friends had now in her such a great lady, such an example and tower of strength, as she had once attempted to be, and arrogantly asserted that she was.

The result was come to in a somewhat different fashion from any she had ever conceived. Her word was absolute in her own home, her counsel regarded abroad, because she had proved herself wise, and made herself loved.

Her house was left greatly to Agnes's management, while she gave such assistance to Oglethorpe as a woman could, and was as active in the administration of her own large properties. Into this latter occupation she carried her newly-found talisman of love, and met there her uncle, Sir Paris, as coadjutor and friend. He put forth, toward the genial warmth of her respect and good-will, attractions, graces, wisdom, of which his niece had in the old days roundly declared him incapable. A well-stored, reflective mind, tolerant largeness of view, and below any surface eccentricities or peevishness an invincible sweetness of temper, and a quiet constancy, — these were the virtues the new Diana found in the new Sir Paris.

He who had been a tiresome Lord Fanny, a

trifling, timorous old maid, was now, with the adored baby, as improved as that old maid wedded and mothering a troop of youngsters. It was not alone Belinda who was offered upon Return's shrine; a hundred petty, carping apprehensions and restrictions went with her; and Sir Paris renewed his youth in the infancy of his grand-nephew.

The thought had sometimes crossed Diana's mind that Archibald Cameron might one day choose to come to Savannah; but of all the ways in which she had figured his appearing there, she never, of course, imagined the thing as it eventually fell out. He was coming up from the West Indies in an English brig, and when the captain decided to put in at the port of Savannah, Cameron's memory was quickened to relate certain reminiscences concerning one Mistress Diana Chaters, and the humiliation which, through him, her pride had suffered at St. Philip's Church in Charles Town, three years gone. His auditors were a handful of lively blades, one or two English naval officers, a younger son or so, a couple of professional ne'er-do-wells, soldiers of fortune, like himself.

With much retelling of the tale, Cameron's boastfulness grew. He and his companions had taken horse as soon as they disembarked at Savannah, and were riding up the street together, since Jack ashore is ever Jack a-horseback, when he reverted to this tale with, "'Tis quite on the cards for the family to be living here yet. I am told they fled to Georgia the very day after that affair — fled as though the Furies were after them."

Young Amyce Pawlet, riding at Cameron's elbow, a pretty fellow himself and a gallant, had not alto-

gether liked the older man's story; and each time Cameron repeated or embellished it, the youth found it yet less to his taste. Now he turned to the speaker with:

"This poor, scorned, derided family which, when you flung your glove in its collective face, ran away pitifully to Savannah — James Oglethorpe's city of refuge for poor debtors and rejected ladies — supposing they are here, Major?"

Cameron had been for some moments ogling a pretty girl who was walking slowly toward them; and being pestered with saucy glances and the toss of a dimpled chin. When Pawlet made this observation, he gave rein. "Where do Sir Paris Chaters and his niece live, Beauty?" he asked amiably.

"There, Beast," she retorted, pointing to Chaters House, which the horsemen had just passed.

With a roar of laughter, and a blowing of kisses to the nimble-witted young Hebe, the party turned back toward the house.

Then before Cameron could reply, young Pawlet clapped him on the shoulder, and cried, "Come, what say you, I'll lay you the lace ruffles I won of Quartermen yesterday, against — a pot of ale — against anything — nothing — that, if this be not one of your fables, if there verily were such people, and they be indeed here in Savannah, you dare not go and show yourself to them now. Come, a wager! a wager!"

"Aye, dare I not?" cried Cameron. "You shall see!"

His reckless blood was up, as the other had in-

tended it should be. He flung himself from horse, and sprang lightly up the broad steps.

After he had lifted and let fall the knocker, he had some time to think, and even his dare-devil spirit flagged a bit. What was this thing he had come to do? To taunt the woman — nay, the defenceless girl — the child — whom he had, three years ago, held up to public ridicule, if not to open shame, because she was inexperienced enough to trust him.

How would she receive him? — saying that she received him at all. Would she faint? Would she come and cling about his knees, to weep and beseech of him? There was a girl at Glasgow who — but she was a gentle, simple creature, all heart — to him. Diana, though a provincial, was a lady, an imperious, high-headed beauty. He decided that she would deny him, or, if she received him, meet him with decently repressed emotion.

Diana, from her chamber window, had seen all; had beheld the party ride past the house, address the maid, turn back; and lastly had observed Cameron's parley with Amyce Pawlet, and his subsequent entry. She was dressing for a dinner at the Manor-House, and her toilet was almost completed. At first sight of Cameron's face in this party, she laid down the ornaments which she had been about to fasten in her hair, and set her hand over her heart to still its tumultuous beating. When she was calmed, she pushed aside the simple gold band first selected for a head-dress, and drawing her jewel casket from its strong box, took out such magnificence as she thought admissible and added it to her already handsome costume. This done, she sailed

splendidly out into the hall, calling softly, "Agnes — Agnes!"

But no Agnes answered her, though her great hooped skirts of brocade brushed close to the foot of one who crouched in the embrasure of the hall window, the curtains clutched about her small, shaking form, cowering with icy, numb hands, dry throat, and dilated eyes that gazed (herself hidden alike from those within the house and those without) at the object of her long quest, come before her vision once more when she had at last found partial peace in relinquishment.

Failing reply, Diana flew to Ma'am Daphne in her kitchen.

"You must send Pompey to the door, Daphne," she directed; "and when I ring, do you bring my son in."

As Archie entered the hall, Diana came sweeping down the stairway, paused at its foot, and made him a grand curtsey. Something in her bearing, a new-come womanliness, a dignity, even the fact that the measure of her beauty had doubled, robbed Cameron of the power to address her as he had intended. He stood, hat in hand, halting like a chidden schoolboy, and finally faltered out, "I am come back, my Lady Di. Have — have you no welcome for me?"

"Your pardon, sir," returned Diana, and her voice showed him yet more the change in her. It was fuller, richer, more musical than of old; but most noticeable of all, it was now a voice to be heard in any assembly; to instantly arrest by its fine under-note of power, but to win its cause after all by sheer, moving sweetness. "Your pardon, sir,

you come methinks something late to expect welcome from me."

The words, simply spoken, pierced Cameron's heart as no appeal nor reproach could have done. He saw, in a glimpse, the score between them as it actually stood, and was for the instant mortally ashamed and repentant.

"Di," he urged, "believe it, or believe it not, I have never ceased to regret the hound's trick I played you. The thought of it hath kept me waking company many a night on a tilting deck when all about me slept. I —"

"Sir," interrupted Diana, "it would be a foolish thing for me to make pretence that I know not of what you speak. I do know. But, believe me, it is a matter no longer of any interest to me."

She spoke with such simple dignity, she looked so beautiful and noble, and, most of all, she denied him so completely, that Archie's blood was fired. He felt for her an admiration and a desire which she had never stirred in the old days, and, "My bonny Di," he cried again, "can you ever forgive me?"

"Nay," she returned, with the same sweet composure which had marked her bearing from the first. (Her knees were shaking till she was scarce able to stand, but he could not guess that, and her colour neither came nor went.) "Nay, sir, your father, perchance, or your own better self may feel aggrieved that you connected an honourable name with a very scurvy performance. But for myself, I have only thanks to offer you, and no reproaches at all."

"You would say," replied Cameron, "that had

I been in earnest in my wooing, you had wed a scoundrel. And so you thank me for the treachery that left you free."

Diana bowed gravely.

"You are angry with me still," he smiled, confident of rewinning a heart once deemed utterly his own. "But sweet Di, I shall change all that." He drew near and would have taken her hand.

Sinking on one knee, forgetful of the men behind him on the street, who through the open doorway might see all, "Ah, dearest," he urged, "I have loved no woman ever, save only you. You, proud, imperious thing, were the first to command this wayward heart. The eagle seeks the eagle for mate; and, sweetheart, one so fair cannot long be unkind to him whose heart she holds in fee."

Diana drew back with haughty pride. "Rise, sir," she replied. "You do not address Diana Chaters. You are not speaking to a spinster. Your words are to Mistress Marshall, wife of Captain Robert Marshall, of General Oglethorpe's army."

"By God!" cried Cameron. "There's pride! You've taken the name of one of those tag-rag canaille rather than bear the shame I put you to — poor girl!"

"Major Cameron," returned Diana, "this is my husband's house. In it I allow no man to miscall him. 'Tis true my marriage followed hard upon your open jilting of me. Being made the sport of a fiend put me in mind, maybe, to appreciate a man."

"A really charming man such as this *ignis fatuus* husband of yours, whom you picked up at a moment's notice, must be," sneered Cameron.

"Aye," returned Diana steadily. The inchoate emotions of past months had crystallised at the touch of this man's personality. By the light of her feeling toward him, she realised how great the love she felt for Robert Marshall. "Aye, the best, the bravest — yea, and the sweetest and most beautiful man on earth, I do believe — 'twas into his arms you pushed me, and I thank you for it."

"A paragon," sneered Cameron. "I would you had a portrait of this brummagem husband, this fabricated man, that I might learn to know his features, so when we meet I could pay back to him a debt of gratitude which weighs me down."

Diana's hand sought the bell-cord. "I have, sir," she said; "and I will send for it. Be sure, when you are paying debts to him, he is a man to reckon with — one who pays his score, as well."

Agnes had crept to the stair-head, where she might feast her eyes upon that never forgotten face. Cameron's protestations pierced her heart like so many knife-thrusts. (How many men would say just what they do to a new love, if they knew an old love was within earshot?)

Now, as Diana gave the man some tithe of his deserts, a strange torturing jealousy of the woman's coldness took possession of the listener. How dare she so miscall him? As Agnes leaned forward, hidden by the draperies, gazing down, shaking with fury and despair, Ma'am Daphne appeared in the doorway, stiff and stately in her white cottonade, with a vast snowy turban above her shining black face, and little Return sitting on her arm. At the sight, Agnes covered her face and sank prone upon

the floor. Thereafter, she heard but did not see what passed below.

The negress bobbed a stiff, sour curtsy to the visitor, and set the child down, when he ran to Diana, clasped her skirts and looked back over his shoulder, eyeing the intruder. Diana lifted him and held him confronting her recreant lover. "'Tis a miniature," she said, breathing a little short, "but done in colours, and excellently like — to the life."

Cameron looked at the two proud creatures, utterly helpless, yet full of the high courage, the indomitable spirit that recks not physical advantage or disadvantage. The boy was very fair. A frank, brave, haughty baby face; the face of a child born to the purple. The sight of her mother's pride shamed something in the man. He put forward his sword hilt. "Come, young soldier," he said, "see the pretty toy. Come take it."

Return looked the man over with those big blue eyes of infancy whose candour is at times so terrible, and answered only with a little shrugging gesture and a shifting of his glance to Diana. It was as though with that motion he put Cameron clean out of his world.

For some occult reason this cut as Diana's reproaches had not done. "What ails him? Is he not friendly?" he asked her, uneasily. "Brats and dogs ever take to me."

"My son is like his father," returned Diana; "so like that you will have no need for other portrait to know him by. And, believe me, sir, his father's attitude will be his. For both of us — all of us — you no longer exist."

A little time Cameron stood, striving to make his

point and patch a peace with both. The bond between mother and child, while the child is yet so young, remains mysteriously strong. Little Return felt, in every fibre, the repulsion which stirred all Diana's being; and finally, when silent repellings ceased to answer, he pointed with his tiny forefinger to the door, and bade the big, booted and spurred soldier "Go."

His baby tongue had, in truth, learned so far only the use of single words. But the command had a sovereign imperiousness about it which made Cameron laugh, and then say humbly to the mother:

"Well, I'll go leave you, Mistress — Mistress Marshall — since his Highness will have it so. But," he added, with a sudden access of bitterness, "when I find the man I'll reckon with him."

And the picture which he carried away in his mind was of the two proud, beautiful, helpless, defiant things, looking after him, and in appearance, if not in words, scorning him and bidding him begone.

Lit had entered quietly at a rear door of the hall during the latter part of this scene, had understood that this man was the Archibald Cameron she had desired so hotly these three years to strangle. She recognised him also as the man to whom she had spoken on the street — nay, at whom she had "cast sheep's eyes and made grimaces," as she would have said; and rage quite overmastered her. As he turned to go, she burst into a derisive peal of laughter, and running across the room, caught up the baby and set him on her shoulder.

"Ho, my little champion!" she called. "Lit's man — Lit's own blessed soldier! Did he make the silly big captain go? Aye, he was twice as

much a man as that great braggart," and she buried her face in Return's pinafore, laughing.

Agnes listening, her mouth in the dust, quivered with rage at the insolent sound. So utter was her subjugation to the idea of this man, so like a mortal disease her insatiable love and longing for him, that it hurt his empire over her not one whit. It only made her furious at those who so used him.

As Archie came down the step, Lit volleying laughter in his back, he tried in vain to screw his face to the careless, sneering smile of the conqueror, to time his step to the victor's strut. In vain he cocked his hat; the face beneath it bore flinching eyes, a vanquished mouth; the renegade muscles of his legs and back traitorously betrayed him to the foe most deadly to him, — the ridicule of others.

Cameron's companions, sitting below on their horses, had seen a great part of the interview and his discomfiture. Now they heard the laughter which followed him, and joined, as is the way of the world, to give the under dog a kick.

"Who's this," cried old Hinchinbroke, "that comes halting back to us with a purser's grin on's face? Is this the game-cock that we sent in but now to strut and lord it?"

Cameron mounted his horse sullenly. "Times have changed, it seems," he growled, "since last I met the lady."

"Perhaps not so greatly as you think," young Amyce Pawlet rejoined. "'Twas that open door that was to blame. Had it been shut we had heard a different —"

Cameron turned furiously on him.

"Look not so black on me. No lady could make

love gracefully before an open door and half a dozen rude fellows — ”

“ Amyce,” broke in Cameron, “ if you would keep that maggoty head sound on your shoulders, why keep it fast closed before. Else, that clapper in it will be getting it broke for you.”

And so the matter was dropped, young Pawlet falling behind Cameron as they rode, to grin expressively at any of the company whose eye he could secure.

The Sabbath after Cameron’s visit, Diana found in the pulpit of her church the field preacher who had so greatly interested herself and Robert at the Christmas fairing.

Master Whitefield had been, between these two dates, to Charles Town, and there was tried before an ecclesiastical court on many grave and serious charges, such as addressing extempore prayers to the Deity when his congregation was unprovided with prayer-books, and spreading the Word of God by other means than those laid down by the canons of that church with which he was still connected. That he was a good man, none denied; that it was not a good gospel he spread, no man asserted; but the manner of his goodness being unacceptable to the Church, and particularly repugnant to the Rev. Commissary Garden in Charles Town, he had been cast out from them, and was now returned to Savannah to devote himself to labouring for his orphans at Bethesda.

Diana Marshall felt, as she listened to this inspired speaker, how very far away from her, spiritually, was that girl who had heard him three years gone. By the emotions which he now aroused,

and the mere curiosity which he had then excited, she measured somewhat her soul's growth. Like all the sermons of this wonderful man, it was a fiery discourse, a searching arraignment. Many there were who wept and openly abjured their sins, even as in the humble crowd about him at the Christmas fair. But Diana, on her knees, her great gray eyes fastened on his face, drank in every word as though it were addressed directly and singly to her own soul. Yet after the service was over and she was once more going to her home, of all the thoughts which he had given her, one remained active and fiery within her breast.

Love, he had told them, is not getting, but spending; it is not receiving, but giving. True love is service. She looked back on her love for Robert Marshall. She had thought herself a queen in generosity when she stood ready to receive him, to requite his love with love as warm. She had sent out her hopes for him to come back to her. Now she realised that such love as her eyes were opened to believe in, could only be expressed by setting forth to hunt him; by taking humbly, willingly, joyfully, the position of suitor. And before she had reached her own door, she had planned to close the house in Savannah, leave her uncle at Sapelo or Wynnewoode as he should elect, and go herself down to General Oglethorpe at St. Simons as a first stage in that personal search for her husband which her whole soul now rose all ardour to prosecute.

It is strange—or we who are not clear seers count it strange—how sudden resolution to adopt a course brings all matters connected with the action into the hand of the one so resolving.

Since Cameron's visit, Agnes had been strangely unlike herself, moody, sullen, with a hunted look in her face; beginning a sentence and breaking off suddenly; coming into the room with an air of resolution as though she had entered it to do or say something of importance; going in a flurried, distraught fashion from table to window, from window to door, and so out again. She was absent often on mysterious errands, which were no less than the tracing of Cameron, and making ready to follow him — though her self-respect bled and cried out at the thought.

Now, her broodings having reached a focus, she met Diana in the hallway. "I am going, Mistress Marshall," she panted rather than said; "I am leaving your service this day. I trust I have been a good servant to you; and I will say for you that you have not been a hard mistress. But — but — I am going."

"Agnes! Agnes! What is this?" cried Diana, looking with amazed eyes. "Mistress? Servant? Such words as these were never used between you and me."

"I am forfeiting my quarter's wage," Agnes pursued bitterly. "I would liefer do so — liefer lose all — than stay another hour in this household, which I should never have entered."

"You forfeit no monies to me," Diana replied with a touch of sternness. "I will not have it so."

"And I will, madam," the Scotchwoman cast back at her. "I will — and for once my will is stronger than yours — bitter strong as it is."

"Very well," agreed Diana with gentle dignity. "I see that I have offended you past mending, in

some way of which I do not know. You are determined to force me to be unjust to you. If you hate me too much to take from my willing, nay, my loving, hands your proper due, so be it. I shall say no more."

But pale Agnes retreated before those outstretched hands with a sort of horror. "Nay," she muttered, "I bear you no ill-will; why should I? But this house is not the place for me. I —"

She broke off suddenly. Denying her denials, there was hatred in that poor face, and a strange, still fury. Little Return, treading in his mother's footsteps, caught her eye, and she flew to him, gathered him up to her sore heart with a bitter cry, and fell to weeping over him as though she would never cease.

"Agnes's baby! Agnes's boy!" she repeated, rocking him softly on her breast. "Oh, it is hard to leave the little man!"

"Come, come," interrupted Diana, attempting to assume a lighter and more practical tone. "What is it, Agnes? Out with it. Has somebody affronted you? Are you angry?"

"No, no, no," sobbed Agnes miserably, "not angry now; I have been; only most wretched. Ask me nothing, Mistress Marshall. I must go. There is — there is — a friend — needs me in — in the place I came from."

So evident was it that questions were painful, that Diana refrained them entirely. Agnes was a woman of some years, and one who might be supposed to be old enough to make her own decisions; yet so ominous did this matter appear, so little joy was there in her going, that Diana's heart ached for

her as she saw the packets brought down-stairs, and the little gray-clad figure make its way to the creek landing. She spared to ask whether the journey contemplated was to be made by boat, by coach, or horseback; and contented herself with offering every possible kindness and solace to the half-distracted woman. But she forbore the money, which, to her thinking, would have been an affront, after what had been said.

"Would you — write to me, Agnes?" she asked, finally, "when you arrive safely wherever it is that you are going?"

"No, Mistress Marshall," returned Agnes somberly. "I should not think it well to do so. You have other interests and it were best I should pass out of your life here and now."

"Why, for the matter of that," replied Diana to her mildly, "I am leaving my home presently. 'Twas for that reason I spoke. A letter might be long in reaching me. I am going down to St. Simons to meet my husband."

"He has been heard from, then?" cried Agnes, sharply. "You have definite news?"

In the effort she made to maintain it, Diana's cheerfulness deepened its lines somewhat. "No, not more definite news than formerly. But I doubt not that the child and I shall be able to find him."

"Do you take the boy with you?" queried Agnes, wistfully. "Ah, a woman with such a son as that on her breast could find the father of it, methinks, though he were half-way to the other world."

CHAPTER VII.

ALATA ANAWAQUA

"AND she's pu'd aff her gowne of green,
And pit on ragged attire,
And all about that land she would goe,
Of her true love to enquire."

WITH characteristic energy and address, Diana set about preparations for going south. She admitted to herself, but to no other soul, a belief that Robert had intentionally separated himself from her, and that a desire to make this separation final accounted for his disappearance. Had she even known where a letter might be sent to him, she dreaded that he would not receive or read it.

Lit was going back down the coast; Sir Paris, very willing to divide his time between Sapelo and the Isle of Hope; Chaters House was to be closed. Her uncle had offered most freely to accompany her, but she put this offer aside, touched with the evidence of devotion, and feeling that for a man of his age and habits to proffer leaving his home and belongings upon such a quest was indeed an ultimate test of affection.

She had at first thought to go down by boat; later, decided that they would take the overland

trail, so that they might have horses with them for further journeying; but upon Lit's representation that better horses and fresh ones could be had from the plantations below, her father's place on Cumberland Island offering a good choice of animals, the original plan was returned to.

Diana took with her Matthew Zubley, the steward. This square-faced, level-headed, practical Dutchman had been in charge of Diana's estate under Sir Paris. He was one of the comfortable servants to whom one could give an order, however strange or unprecedented, without suffering the annoyance of surprised inquiry or comment. Faithful, tenacious, honest, he accepted the search for Diana's husband exactly as he would have undertaken any prosaic detail of his stewardship. It was not, to his mind, wildly strange that two women and a little child should set forth with him into a region menaced by Spanish invasion, with no more definite leading than the vague rumours which were all that had reached Diana since Robert's departure.

At this time the existence of the American colonies rested upon the preservation of Georgia, as the safety of a castle may depend upon the defence of its gate. The new, feeble colony lay next the cruel, rapacious Spaniard. It, he must devour ere he swept up the coast and inland, as his threat and taunt ever was. And Frederica lay upon its frontiers, a new Thermopylæ, held shut for yet a little time in the face of the enemy.

After the long-cherished plan of capturing St. Augustine failed in 1740, Oglethorpe, abandoned by such allies as its prosecution had brought him, had his great heart full, and his remarkable powers

taxed to the utmost, to protect his little band of impoverished colonists, defending whom, he defended the entire country. His lot was to bear in patience the taunts of Spanish foes, the calumny of colonial enemies, the censure of those who could not comprehend his retreat from Augustine; and yet, amidst it all, to sustain with a pitiful handful of troops the posts he had established. He felt pledged to protect Georgia from invasion, when even the smallest military knowledge conceded its almost defenceless state.

"Oglethorpe had to contend," says his historian, "not only with the Spanish foes, but with the restless Indians, — with the clamorous settlement, with discontented troops, with meagre supplies, — with the defection of Carolina, with the protest of his bills, and the refusal of a just naval protection."

There was indeed little money for his enterprises. His private means were heavily taxed for the public weal. Yet, unrelaxing in his vigilance, he kept parties of Indians — that soldiery so devoted to him, so ready to his hand, and so cheaply paid — hovering about the frontiers of Florida. These occasionally brought in a Spanish prisoner, since Oglethorpe was one English commander who was able to induce the Indians to bring their prisoners to him, instead of disposing of them in their usual ghastly fashion.

Toonahowi, more than a year after Robert's capture at Moosa, led a band of Creeks up to the very walls of Augustine, near which they took Don Romualdo Ruiz del Moral, Lieutenant of Spanish Horse, and nephew of the late governor. The

Indian chief brought and delivered the young Spaniard to Oglethorpe.

This gave the general his first good opportunity to treat for exchange. The governor of Augustine promptly sent up an English prisoner, with a letter, and in it a petition from the English who were prisoners in the castle of Augustine. But alas! Robert's name did not appear upon it. Diana, although she expressed the doubt to no one, felt it possible that he was there, but had refused to set his name to the document because he desired his whereabouts to remain unguessed.

So two years wore away, spent by the general in unremitting toil, preparing for the threatened invasion, which failed to become a fact only because Cuba was so instantly menaced by the English forces under Vernon and Wentworth.

Diana's party arrived safely at Frederica. It consisted of the two women, the child, and Zubley. They had attached themselves to a squad of soldiers going down to join Oglethorpe.

Frederica, on the Island of St. Simons, of which no trace now exists, save some excavations where then were the magazine and the moat of the fort, reached its apogee of prosperity and importance about the time of this last Spanish invasion. It was a walled town, on the western side of the beautiful island, and at the mouth of the Alatamaha; and it had for its protection the only fort of any importance in Georgia. This fort, with great tappy walls judged strong enough to be proof against heavy shot, had a fair battery of 18-pounders mounted on the ravelin in its front that commanded the Alatamaha both upward and down. Inside the

fort was the king's storehouse and arsenal, the court of justice and the chapel, two large spacious buildings of brick and timber.

The town was surrounded by a rampart, with flankers of the same thickness of that around the fort. Outside of that was a dry, palisadoed ditch, which, according to Diana's suggestion to Oglethorpe, during that family conclave at Wynnewoode, had been provided with gates to admit the influx of the tide when desired. The fort overlooked a marsh in which a battery of guns was set, very nearly level with the water, and calculated to do deadly work upon an enemy's shipping. In the bay before the town, vessels of great burden might lie safely alongside its wharf, and upon occasion haul up to careen and refit, there being a good bottom of clay mixed with sand and shells.

The whole town was about a mile and a half in circumference; and outside of it to the east, across a great savannah, might be seen several beautiful plantations, General Oglethorpe's among the number, while at the end of the road leading that way was the German village of Salzburger fishermen.

At this date, the houses built in Frederica were more solid and pretentious than those in Savannah itself. The island town had come later than the city which was destined to be the metropolis of the colony, and for a time seemed well-nigh to outgrow it. Later, when the expulsion of the Spaniard from Florida rendered these forts and fortified towns of the Sea Islands unnecessary for defence, their usefulness being past, they sank into decay, to be re-born when the country, whose infancy they de-

fended, had grown to sufficient estate to have need of their beauty and salubrity as pleasure resorts.

It was early in June, and Diana and her party found the island put in a state of defence. Oglethorpe's own regiment was occupying the fort, and very large reinforcements of Indians were camped further inland. The general received Diana with remonstrant kindness.

"My dear lady," he said, "here is no place for you. A little later, when we have driven these Spaniards back, I will give you a peaceful country through which to search; but indeed, I would you had remained in Savannah. Do you not know, my dear, that the Spaniards have formed a design upon Georgia, or more likely this entire coast? Last May, was fitted out at the Havana, an armada of fifty-six sail, carrying seven or eight thousand men. Storms have somewhat dispersed this fleet, but we have information that Governor Monteano has been reinforced at Augustine by at least two battle-ships."

"That is on the water, my dear general," Diana answered bravely. "And I shall pursue my search upon land."

"Upon water, truly, but will they long remain so? Captain Haymer of the *Flamborough* fell in with a part of the Spanish fleet off the coast of Florida, and drove some of their vessels ashore; and I have writ to the commander of his Majesty's ships in the harbour of Charles Town, urging him to come to my assistance. Lieutenant Maxwell took the letters up in June, and directly afterward I sent Lieutenant MacKay to Governor Glenn, and expect that he will send military aid with all expedition.

My Indians are here under Toonahowi. Truly this is now no place for women and children."

Diana smiled resolutely. "Why, my dear general," she said, "you have women and children here. Believe me, we can accept such chances of war as do they."

The two women and the baby were given the general's villa, the only home which he ever possessed in America.

Lit was full of secret tremblings. A perturbation and disquiet that she could not hide possessed her. She eagerly asked the general for news of her father. Oglethorpe knew nothing; and more apprehensive than ever, she went among some of her Scotch friends inquiring of Buckaloo's whereabouts. They told her that he was at Cumberland, bringing up supplies of cattle for the provisioning of the garrison at Frederica. And after seeing Diana comfortably settled, she asked and was given leave to go south to him.

The second day after Diana's advent, there arrived at the island, from the north, a very famous Indian queen, Alata, who was at the head of a branch of the Upper Creek Confederacy. She came desiring to purchase supplies, and offering warriors to the general.

Diana was called, with others, to the lookout of the fort to see these Indians come down, and a very imposing sight they were. The deputation came in three long periaguas, that which contained the queen leading, and the other two holding positions to the right and left, and half a length in the rear, moving as steadily as though the three boats were operated by one mechanism. The warriors were in full

regalia, painted and feathered. They did not sing, as negro rowers are wont to do, but bent to their paddles with silent energy.

In the prow of the foremost boat sat the queen, a tall, finely formed young woman, dressed in a drapery of scarlet cotton cloth. Her hair was braided in the Indian fashion, but she wore upon it a sort of diadem, rudely wrought of brightly dyed porcupine quills, and such beads as the traders used in their traffic with the Indians; these threaded upon deer-sinews, and so embroidered upon a band of deerskin.

Diana was present when the general received the queen and party, and it was evident that her appearance excited the liveliest interest on the part of the Indian woman. Alata immediately asked, by means of the interpreter, whether this young woman was a queen, or of high rank; and in spite of her dignity and Indian impassiveness, she examined Diana's costume with a minuteness which left no detail unconsidered.

"My warriors," she said to the general, "desire to dance before the white chief and his officers, and," with a sudden glance, "before the white ladies. It is our manner of showing honour, and as we would depart on the morrow, that the warriors which I have promised to you may arrive in time, we will dance for you at moonrise, if you will appoint the place and be present there."

The general received this offer in a fitting manner. As he and Diana were returning to his home, he laughingly communicated to her a request which the interpreter had made of him. The queen, he said, very much desired that the ladies (or, as he

understood it, Diana alone) would appear at the dance in robes of state.

"When I prepared for this journey," Diana replied smilingly, "I did not expect that I should be called upon to do homage to a queen. I have with me for wear, scarce more than a pilgrim's hodden-gray; but I will do what I may to honour this stately young majesty. What like will the dance be, General Oglethorpe? So long as I have lived in this land, I have never seen an Indian dance."

"Why, so far as I may guess from those which I have observed," the general answered her, "'twill be a war-dance. They will make a ring, in the middle of which four, or perchance it may be six, of the warriors will sit down, having little drums made of kettles covered over with tanned deerskin. They will beat upon these with short sticks or with the doubled fist, and some have great skill to strike upon them with the fingers only, as in playing the harpsichord. Around them gather the dancers, adorned with trinkets and skins, and with the tails of beasts hung about their waists. They will be painted much more marvellously than they were to-day, their hair beautifully stuck with quills and feathers. Nay, 'tis not merely in their hair. You have seen war-bonnets, have you not, my child?"

"I have not only seen them," Diana answered, "but I have had one upon my head, and the last feathers of it touched the floor as I stood."

"Well, then, such war-bonnets as that they will wear, and carry rattles, and a contrivance made of eagle's feathers, which looks not unlike the caduceus of Mercury. They will shake these feathers

and the rattles, and dance and bound about the ring with antic postures which mind one of the figures of satyrs on a classic frieze. Those I have seen showed great activity, and kept very just time in their motions to the beating of the drums and the singing. At certain points the dancers will answer, as it were by way of chorus, to those who sit in the middle of the ring and sing the body of the song. Then, when they have gone through such motions as are necessary, the music is stopped, and one of the chief warriors will stand out — perchance the queen Alata herself will take this part — and sing what wars he hath been in, and describe by actions as well as words which way he hath vanquished the enemies of his country. And when he is done, all the rest will give a shout of approbation as knowing what he says to be true."

The Indian dance was given on the parade-grounds inside the fort. The officers and their wives sat or stood in a little group, in one of the bastions, while about the edge of the circle was a fringe of Indians, townspeople, and soldiers of the garrison. Light came from the rising moon, and from great light-wood torches held by Alata's Indians at intervals around the big ring. These, while they added picturesqueness to the scene, made so intolerable a heat that it was strange the dancers could maintain their exertions near them. The arrangement was as the general had described, only that the line of drum-beaters was longer, and the number of dancers, as he said, very large.

Diana was unable to understand the Creek words of the droning chant, yet fancied she could thread the antic postures of the dancers into a consecutive

story whereby was told the history of how the enemy was discovered, attacked, vanquished.

When this point in the tale had been reached, Alata, not heretofore visible, stepped forth from among her women. Nobly-moulded, long-limbed, and deep-chested, this woman who held the chieftainship as much by personal force and the ability to command as by hereditary right, had the stature of a man, the port of a king. Her well-shaped head indicated fine reasoning powers. If the hawk-like profile, the piercing eye, and proud carriage lacked something of feminine suavity, they no doubt inferred that which was necessary to make her a chieftainess and an idol among her people.

The finding of an occasional female ruler among the Indians of North America is less surprising when their method of government is considered. These Southern tribes, at least, had always their war-chief, and their peace-chief, or Mico. This latter might not unreasonably be a woman, a queen, taking into consideration their tendency to hold the office as hereditary, and the possible failure of male heirs. Alata had been accepted by her father and his tribe in default of a male inheritor; but to the prudence, foresight and administrative ability of an excellent queen added the valour which had more than once, in the absence of her war-chief, offered competent defence, or led her fighting men to victory.

The effect of her study of Diana's dress was apparent in the queen's attire. There was no war paint upon her face; her hair had been loosened from the Indian woman's inevitable braids, and in memory of its former confinement the great black

masses which swept to her knees held a heavy wave not natural to them, but adding greatly to their beauty. The diadem, pushed back, bound her hair so that it did not fall forward upon her cheeks. Her red cloth had been exchanged for a sort of tunic of white muslin, contrived from a square, perhaps six feet across, folded and draped and girdled about the waist with a great rope of beads or beaded leather. One might have guessed that she was satisfied with her appearance; though, had she not been so, the impassive dignity of the Indian permits no self-deprecatory glances.

A murmur of admiration went up from the white people as she stood forth, and a great hand-clapping arose, spontaneous tribute to her beauty and dignity, and her womanhood. She received it with a grave smile, the drummers struck up a thundering, shuddering prelude.

Suddenly, like an explosion of sound, the singers shouted the one word, "Alata!" and as abrupt a silence ensued. Then Alata began to chant. She intoned dramatically, with long pauses, in which Toonahowi murmuringly translated for Diana.

"Listen all ye white people. Harken and give ear, ye people of my own race.

Thus did Alata vanquish the enemies of her fathers, and thus were those who came up against her made to bite the dust.

The Six Nations waxed fat in their hunting-grounds; the Back Enemy grew mighty under the shadow of the mountains to the north.

The Mohawk said in his fatness, 'I will go forth for to destroy this woman.

The people who follow after her shall be as though they were not.'

He came forth snorting, the war-paint upon his face.

He came forth yelling, the war-drink drunken, and the war-dance danced.

His men were as the leaves of the oak, and as the sands of the sea were his braves,

As the sands of the sea were they for number, and as the panther's breed for fierceness.

I sat close in my town. I made my braves to lie down behind the barriers of my town.

Like the stillness of a dead man was the stillness of our dwellings,

Like the stillness of him from whom life has gone was the stillness of our lodges.

Wild Eagle said to his warriors, 'This is a people silent from fear, and who cannot rise to stand upon their feet through trembling.'

I restrained my brave men with a word. My young men impatient, I held back as in a leash.

Then, when they were run boasting in upon us, when a hand outstretched might well-nigh have touched them,

We sped our arrows in a rain upon them; we pierced them with a sudden rain of arrows.

Safe behind our barriers we smote them; covered by our barriers we laid them low.

I, even I a woman, have vanquished the strong men of the Six Nations.

Lo! there is mourning in the land of the Oneidas.

There is mourning among the women of the Tuscaroras.

Hark to the widows howling on the mountains to the northward.

For those who came against us in their strength are not returned.

Their scalps hang as a girdle at the waist of Queen Alata.

For them the fosky shall be brewed in vain; for them the council fire shall blaze in vain.

For them the women shall wait in vain; their scalps hang at the belt of Queen Alata.

For them the women shall wait in vain, lingering at the lodge-door, peering into the darkness —

Their scalps hang at the girdle of Alata.

I have said."

All through the tempest of Alata's eloquence — for the chant was in fact a flight of impassioned oratory — Diana sat bent forward, gripping the

arm of her chair, her eyes glued to the face of the protagonist, her breath coming short.

"I am sorry," she said, with a sigh, as the song closed, "that Lit was not here to be interpreter for us two women. Never have I seen an Indian woman who seems so nearly one of our own people. I should like to talk to her."

"May I repeat your words to Alata?" Toonahowi asked softly; and Diana, turning, saw that the Indian queen was coming toward them with the general.

The first words of this young Amazon, whose war-like chant had just swayed the hearts of all the warriors present, seemed a little difficult for Toonahowi to render. He glanced in a puzzled fashion from one to the other of the two women before him, both tall, haughty, imperious-looking, yet differing so in their beauty, and finally said to Diana with something very like a smile on his serious face, "Alata desires greatly to know of this robe which you wear, whether you bought it in Savannah, or was it brought from overseas in the great country of the white men?"

The general hid his amusement by bending to lift little Return, who should have been in his bed asleep, but who had begged to see the dance. Diana smiled too, but answered gently, "I bought it, and all the clothing which I have, in Savannah or Charles Town. That is," she explained, understanding in a flash what the savage woman's bewilderment must be, "I bought the cloth, but it is cut into pieces, and sewed together with thread, as the coats of the men are. See," and she drew near Alata, holding

up a sleeve, "there are two parts in this. Here — and here — it is sewed."

Alata's slender brown fingers interrogated the seams, while both glances and touch flattered the lace, and she looked wistfully at Toonahowi.

"There is no word in our language," Toonahowi translated, "for what she wishes to ask. I think she desires to know whether this," pointing to the lace, "is cloth, and how one may come by it."

Diana's head was covered, to keep the sea breeze from disarranging her coiffure, with a great square of English blonde, hand-wrought about the edge in a pattern near a foot deep. This she took off, and put it with her own hands upon the queen's head. "Tell her," she said to Toonahowi, "that I love all friends of General Oglethorpe's. Tell her that I think she is a very brave woman, and most generous to lead her warriors to battle for us, her white brothers and sisters; say, too, that I think her most beautiful, and most royal, and that I would be glad if I had something of more value to give her than this bit of lace."

In a translation to the queen she noticed that the word "lace," having no equivalent in the Creek language, was repeated unchanged, with an indescribable soft, lisping, rolling sound, which made one realise, what the first missionaries found true, that these beautiful Indian words can only be reproduced by the signs of the Greek alphabet.

The Indian queen put up her hands to loosen from her neck a strange circlet of beaten copper, evidently of aboriginal workmanship, and come down from the Northern tribes who hammered armlets, diadems and necklets from the almost pure

copper ores found about Lake Superior. She apparently designed offering this to Diana; but her glance falling upon little Return, who sat on the general's shoulder regarding the proceedings with very round eyes, her fingers hesitated, trembled, fell away from the necklet, and her hands dropped helpless to her sides.

She turned beseeching eyes to Toonahowi, and gasped something in Creek. "She desires to know whose child the boy is," he said.

"He is my son," Diana replied proudly, "and will be a soldier as his father is. Come, Return, offer your hand to the queen, for she is a soldier, too."

Alata drew back one silent step, her eyes still fastened on the child. Then, as Diana took him on her arm, and he put out to the queen a little white, dimpled fist, accompanied by a glance of affectionate admiration from his frank blue eyes, she came forward again, and touched the small hand with her forehead.

"Is not that a sign of submission?" Diana asked laughingly of Toonahowi.

"Yes, mistress," he returned, "it is as much as to say that the baby is king, and she his subject."

"Why, so he is," the general commented. "All infants of his age are kings and queens, and rule us about them, their leal subjects, right royally."

The queen seemed to have lost all interest in the dress of white ladies, and to have eyes only for Return. She asked through her interpreter if the child would be afraid of her, and might she be allowed to take him in her arms. She did so, and very noble she looked with the fair babe resting like a snowflake upon her heroic, bronze-coloured bosom.

Diana smilingly asked if she had sons of her own. Toonahowi did not translate the question, but answered that Alata was not married, and added in a lower tone that her tribe was impatient that she should be, the Indians desiring the chieftainship to go by inheritance, as it had come thus to her from her father.

"And what does the white lady whom you call 'Fair Moon'?" — it was thus Toonahowi had translated Diana's Christian name — "what does she here?" questioned Alata, above Return's flaxen head.

"Tell her," responded Diana with that confidence she would not permit herself to lose, "that I have come to be with my husband, who is a soldier."

But Toonahowi, for some reason of his own, translated the words, "She seeks her husband, who was a warrior — a chief under General Oglethorpe — and is lost. I pray you, my sister, wish her success in this search."

Alata gave the child into Toonahowi's arms, looked aside to where some of her men were grouped, "Success," she said, "goes where the Great Spirit wills it. Who am I, to portion out success to the mighty white people under whose foot we lie?"

The speech concluded with a bitterness which Toonahowi did not permit to reach Diana in his translation, and they went back to the house. Return asleep on the tall young Indian chief's broad breast, Diana and the general walking together and talking of Alata, whom she would see no more, since the queen's party departed before daybreak on the following morning.

CHAPTER VIII.

FATHER AND DAUGHTER

"BUT when he saw his daughter dear
Coming on most foremostly,
He wrung his hands, and tore his hair,
Crying out most piteously:
'For I have made a vow,' he sed,
'The which must be replenished.'"

WHEN Diana waked in the morning, she found Lit gone. It was on the twentieth of June that the dance occurred, and on the morning of the twenty-first, some little time before daybreak, word was brought to the general that a fleet of nine vessels had made an attempt upon Amelia Island and been repulsed by the cannons of Fort William. His plan was to instantly support Fort St. Andrews on Cumberland, up toward which the fleet must now be driving.

This was the opportunity for which Lit longed, and she begged to be permitted to accompany the troops, reminding the general that he had taken Mary Musgrove, the half-breed woman who acted as his interpreter, into positions of as great danger. Herself, she urged, would gladly act as interpreter with the Creek and Cherokee warriors, insisting that she was not afraid, and promising that she would, if he desired her to do so, remain in the hospital boat, which was expected to pick up the

wounded, hoping to be of value to him in nursing or caring for them. The outcome of the matter was, that when the little fleet, consisting of the general's cutter and a couple of guard-boats, started out from St. Simons, Lit was with them.

It has been said since, and was no doubt freely said then, that James Oglethorpe did a foolhardy thing when he pushed through a fleet of fourteen hostile sail, as he was presently obliged to do, with a cutter and two guard-boats. It has been pointed out (by sober-minded people sitting at home in safety) that, had his boat been disabled or himself wounded, the colony of Georgia (and through it the English in America) would have lain at the mercy of the Spaniard — who had no mercy. That the expedition appeared to the general necessary; that he performed it in safety, by running to the leeward of the Spanish fleet, where the smoke of their own guns prevented their taking accurate aim; that he relieved the garrison at St. Andrews, by removing it with its stores and artillery to reinforce Fort William, and made his way — without the loss of a man, without so much as a wound — back to St. Simons must be his excuse.

Lit was on Cumberland more than a week. She found there those who told her that her father was gone inland for supplies, and who thought with her that, as the coast was clear at the moment, but liable to be alive with Spanish any day, it was not a safe place for his return, and that he should be warned of the present state of affairs.

At the end of that time, Mistress Golightly was brought to the plantation by one of Dad's Creeks. Lit took the mare, was set across to the mainland,

given the fords and safe trails for St. Mary's and, with a lighter heart than she had borne for many a day, set out toward the river plantation, which, as she must travel, was above twenty-three miles from the spot where she was landed, about noon the third of July. She rode hard, and reached the plantation house somewhere between three and four o'clock in the afternoon. The house and its environs were empty and deserted. For the first time since stone had been laid upon stone in its walls, and one great tree-trunk set against its fellows in the stockade, there was no sign of human occupancy.

So strange, so almost menacing a state of affairs, gave the girl pause. She dismounted, tied Mistress Golightly, and scouted forward, believing that there had been a raid or massacre, and dreading at every turn to come upon a dead body.

There was nothing. No hogs were in the pens, no cattle about the barns. Door and window were set wide; through them came the hot, silent sunlight and swooning air of a South Georgia June.

After searching the place from end to end, and finding no clue to the mystery — yet nothing to further alarm her — the weary girl attended to the comfort of her horse, found some food among the household stores and, having eaten, threw herself upon a bed and slept for twelve hours without stirring.

She woke in the gray dawn, to find Weeping Moon scowling at her from the bed foot. "Where is my father — where is Salequah?" she cried, sitting up on the couch, and pushing the heavy hair off her face.

"Gone to the English," came the grudging answer, "and taken the boy with him."

"Where are all the hogs, the sheep, the cows? Why was the stockade empty, when I came yesterday, and the house like a place of burial rather than the home of the living?"

"Your father has taken all — all — to give to the English. As for the house — it was not empty — I was in it — in the loft — but you did not call me, and I came not forth."

Lit looked in the Indian woman's eyes, and knew she lied — what profit to question her further? The girl rose and busied herself getting a bit of corn bread and some dried meat, while Weeping Moon, who had followed to the kitchen, watched her movements with baleful eyes.

Finally Lit returned to the only source of information open to her. "How long is it since my father departed?" she asked the old squaw.

After a lengthened silence, Weeping Moon replied in a surly tone, "How can I say? He left from the pastures, not from the house."

"Which trail did he take?" Lit pursued.

"Do you think I am a sorcerer?" the squaw flung back fiercely, "that I can see through a mountain? How do I know what trails he takes?"

"Who is here?" was Lit's next inquiry. "Are Chutabeeche or Soota-Milla on the plantation?"

"They are gone over to the Spanish," Weeping Moon answered her. "Everybody is gone over to the Spanish but your fool of a father; and he has not sense enough to know which way his death lies, but will go to this man Oglethorpe on the island, who is not able to do anything for him. He must

give the English chief his cattle, which will certainly never be paid for. But for my part, I care not. Let the white people go to the white people, say I."

"Why do you fling the word 'white' at me?" Lit asked her. "Am I not half Indian, and the daughter of your husband?"

"Nay, I know not," answered Weeping Moon, darkly. "I think that your heart is not Indian at all; and I believe that you would work mischief to me and to my people."

Lit looked at the malignant face, rose silently and went out to feed, water, saddle and bridle Mistress Golightly. Weeping Moon had said that Dad was gone north with the cattle. Weeping Moon hated her, and would be very willing to compass her death; was it likely, then, that she would give her the truth about her father? Lit's suspicions that the defection she had dreaded two years before was now actually come about — that her father had gone over to the Spanish, or worst and most cruel of all, was aiding them while still holding a fair face to his own countrymen — became almost a certainty. She mounted the mare, who, like herself, was well rested and refreshed, and rode upon the trail northward.

Once out of sight of the house, she turned and fetched a great compass around the plantation toward the east. Her objective point was the Cowpens down the St. Mary's, far toward the coast, the outpost of her father's cattle range and pasture, where she hoped to find him, and where she feared also to find the Spanish emissary, or emissaries, with whom he was treating. She had gone probably two miles when, rounding a little hammock of palmetto, she came upon a boy riding a bright bay pony.

Both slim arms went up with a joyous whoop, and the little lad dug heel into the pony's sides, and came loping forward. It was Salequah. Lit opened her arms as the bay swept in against Mistress Golightly, and boy and girl sat side by side on their horses, clasped in a long embrace.

"God bless my little man!" murmured Lit in musical Creek, laying the child's head with its rich black hair back on her shoulder, leaning her cheek to the dark one of her brother. "Where is he going? And where is his daddy gone? ... wants to know."

The boy drew himself out of her embrace, and looked at her very seriously. "O, Lit!" he said, "I know father doesn't wish you to be told; but I did not promise him I would not tell you. He has gone to the Cowpens; and I heard Weeping Moon tell him that she would say to every one who came that he had gone north with cattle for the garrison at St. Simons."

"Well, my little brave," said the sister as she kissed him, "farewell. Mind, I left the plantation-house just now going north — *north*, remember — and Weeping Moon is to believe that I *went* north."

"And she sent me away that I might not see you!" the boy whispered. "I am sure of that."

"Well, then," returned Lit laughing, "mind that you didn't see me."

"I shall not tell of it," the child declared, staunchly. Then the two parted, and, with a mind full of misgivings, Lit rode eastward along the river.

Five miles from the plantation, Mistress Golightly began to go lame. Lit finally dismounted and examined the mare's foot; it was hot and swollen. The

girl was in despair. A little to the northward of her route was the home of Essoboa, a Creek, kinsman of Salequah, but an excellent smith and farrier. To this man she now, perforce, repaired, walking the mare the greater part of the way.

The clearing was a quaint mixture of aboriginal and civilised life. It was not quite the Golden Age, for there stood the forge; primitive, it is true, yet adequate, sheltered by its thatch of palmetto, and with the lithe Indian workman industriously at work. Beyond it was the hut, built by setting small tree-trunks in the ground, and thatched like the forge with palmetto. Behind that, stood the blue-green fields of maize and tobacco, with pumpkins, melons, and herbs, where Anona, the smith's wife, toiled, with her wooden spade and hoe of chipped flint; or the man used the more efficient tools which his trade taught him to make in imitation of those used by the whites.

The little hut was like a brooding hen, its creamy palmetto thatch serving for outspread wings; while, from its crevices and chinks, peeped everywhere the bright eyes of little, naked, dusky Indian children.

The smith greeted her gravely, took the horse's hoof in his hands and bent above it, shaking his head. "Bad foot, bad foot," he concluded, as he set it down. "You ride no more this sun."

"But I must, Essoboa," Lit remonstrated. "I must get to my father at the Cowpens. I have a message for him."

The Indian promised to doctor the foot as best he could. Earnestly entreated, he finally conceded it as possible that she might ride on by four o'clock. "Go to the house. Let Anona feed you," he said.

Once in the hut, the silent-footed Anona going to and fro preparing the midday meal, and keeping the hordes of mute brown children away from their guest, the drowsiness of the hot noon overcame Lit. She had been almost sleepless on Cumberland; she had been torn with anxiety during her ride down to the plantation. Now a sudden numbing sensation, a feeling that matters were out of her hands, seemed to have taken possession of her, and she lay in her hostess's rude hammock and slept till called to dinner; and after that once more till Essoboa waked her, saying that he had used such embrocations and rude surgery as were possible in that short time, and believed the mare could travel as far as the Cowpens, if not pushed to great speed.

It went to Lit's heart to ride the limping creature at all. Yet life and death — aye, and a black and bitter shame worse than death itself to her — might hang upon the service of the white Mistress's ailing feet. "Poor girl," she said, leaning down and patting the satiny neck softly, "'tis little you know about the things that make my heart ache — and well 'tis for you, Mistress. I wish sometimes that I were a simple beast of the field. I'm little more — but just enough to teach me suffering. O Lord! Lord! if Dad is doing what I think he is, it's certain he will be drunk, or crazed with drink; and what shall I do with him, how cope with him, God knows."

The empty corral at home had shown her that old Dad was, as usual, riding the big black horse. Aware that the Mistress was almost certain to neigh a greeting to her son if she came within hailing distance, Lit dismounted a quarter of a

mile from the Cowpens, and tethered the white mare in the scrub. As she herself stole away toward the pen, she looked back pitifully to where the poor beast drooped uncomplainingly.

The stockade stood in an old Indian field. These spaces cleared by the aborigines were to be found on all the Sea Islands, and near many of the coasts, and pointed out to the settlers the richest soil for agriculture. The clearing offered no cover for the girl; but as the shadows were beginning to gather thickly, she left the forest to the westward of the pen, and crept forward on hands and knees, so that any sentry or lookout who might be posted would, in observing her, take her for a calf or wild sheep. That she ran a risk of being shot, in this case, was the least of Lit's anxieties; and when, having reached the stockade, she heard her father's voice inside rumbling out a fragment of old Gaelic song, her heart mounted with positive relief.

Crawling close and peering in, she could see old Dad, a Spaniard in civilian's dress, and a man whom she recognised, after a time and with some difficulty, as Junius, in his uniform of colonel of Spanish Grenadiers. Dad was drinking, of course; but he had come to the magnificent stage when Junius was not permitted to sit in his presence. The negro, his features dragged into a sardonic sneer, was standing serving Dad with liquor, the Spaniard quietly looking on and exchanging glances with the negro.

"I tell you," roared Buckaloo, "that your masters have bitter need of a pilot to lead them into the channels of St. Simons and Cumberland. One that knows not every bar and inlet as he knows his

breeches pocket can very handily sink your armada, or run it into a trap and leave it at the mercy of your foes."

The Spanish gentleman was silent. It was Junius who spoke, with that crisp enunciation which was so unlike the soft, blurring negro utterance. "Surely, your Excellency, we know — the commander and myself — what is needed, and we come to where the thing may be had, and we offer what we think will buy the thing."

"No, by the Lord!" growled Buckaloo. "You offer money to a man who has no need of it; and you hem and haw over a title —"

"To a man who has no need of it?" interrupted the Spaniard, smoothly. "Your Excellency has a Scotch title of your own — is it not so? And in any case, a man so distinguished must scorn such fond toys as titles."

"Scorn them?" echoed Dad irritably, "that I do. But I choose to have the toy — for my son."

"Your son," interrupted Junius, in pretended surprise, "is the great-grandchild of a king! Surely this title of which you speak would bring no pride to him."

"Aye, but I choose to give him a Spanish title," Dad chafed. "The Scotch name, he is like not to bear. Enough of this haggling and chaffering. Do you want a pilot — or failing him, the chart — or do you not? Will you pay my price, or will you not? Out with it, and begone with you!"

The men once more exchanged swift, stealthy glances. "Of a certainty," spoke the Spaniard, with some enthusiasm, "when we know you to be for us — when we find you to be of us — nothing

will be denied. Our commandant hath the patent signed — *signed* — with the royal seal upon it. It but waits to know that you are to be trusted to the death."

"Pancho Aldonado — you know him —" broke in the black impatiently. "he passes for a deserter from Spain there in the fort at Frederica. And he —"

"He hath the general's ear," the Spaniard's voice took up the theme; "and he cozened him with a tale of being afear'd to fall into our hands in case there were a battle; and so he got leave to go north and inland. They even gave him a boat. He came straight through to our commanders. He was last night in our ships. He told us all he knew. Now he is to go back, saying to the English that he did lose his way, that he dared not try to push through the Spanish shipping. 'Tis arranged that he will, as soon as he can, blow up the magazine at Frederica. That is the signal for our ships to close in. Under cover of the smoke and confusion we can dare to do so. Now you see why we must have pilots — not charts — why we must have you. Behold, we trust you — we tell you all our secret plans, we let you see our desperate need of you. We promise what you will. Is it —"

At the word "Frederica," Lit had quivered and almost cried out. "The baby," she groaned, "my dear Mistress Diana — nay, it shall not — I must —"

So absorbed was she in listening to this dialogue, and in the painful and intense emotions it aroused, that she abated somewhat of her original caution, and raised herself slightly to see and hear better,

when a sudden hand descended upon her shoulder like the stroke of a bludgeon. She was clutched and dragged toward the stockade gate by Chunkey, who yelled at every step, "A spy! A spy! Ho, Junius, a spy!"

Lit was larger and stronger than her wiry little captor, and had she not been willing to go in, there would have been some difficulty in making her do so. As it was, the two entered the stockade together, Chunkey vociferating that the girl had been spying and listening. The Spaniard stood back with glowing eyes that talked death. Junius sprang forward to help the black woman. Dad, turning upon the three, flushed darkly, whether more with rage or shame, it is difficult to say.

"Take your hands off her!" he roared. "'Tis my child, my daughter, I tell you!" The Spaniard still said nothing; and now Junius stood back beside him. "'Tis a woman," he said, "with your life and mine in her hands, old man. Spying is hanging work, if you please; and a squaw more or less, what is it?"

Old Dad got unsteadily to his feet. "Are you talking to me," he inquired, with portentous slowness, "of taking the life of my daughter?"

"It is w'at you will have to do," Junius retorted, "or," as the big man came nearer, "shut her up where she'll do no harm."

"Yea, shut her up I will," Dad returned. "Lit, come here. Sit thou beside me." Then, his anger flowing back in a tide, "Shut her up, will I, you black fiend? Another such speech as that, and I will shut you up where only the devil and his damned may hear you when you cry out!"

Junius perceived, evidently, that he had gone too far. He glanced to the Spaniard, who thereupon spoke. "I understand, señor," he observed suavely, "that you are a man of sense. You will attend to this matter, I am sure, in a proper manner. As for the title, no doubt 'tis yours. I will bring you the patent, signed and sealed, to the boats; and it shall be put in your hands when we enter the bay before Frederica. Or, if the chart you speak of, of all those islands, channels, and —"

Dad glanced toward Lit, and the Spaniard broke off.

"If your Excellency —" began Junius with his sneering smile.

"Yah," railed the old man, "waste no purser's grins on me. What I do is not done for to please an accursed runagate black — no, nor to please the King o' Spain himself! 'Tis for my son I do this thing — saying that I do it at all."

"There, there, señor, we need not quarrel; our interests jump together," put in the Spaniard. But the "runagate black" stuck fast in Junius's throat.

"I will call your attention, sir," he said bitterly, "to the fact that, entirely apart from the Señor Don Incarnacion Onelez, I have twenty men here of my own colour, and that I have used no threat against you."

Dad looked him over with something too fierce for a smile, yet which carried amusement in it. "Aye," he said softly, his voice dropping to that satin-smooth tone within which its great volume was capable of confining itself; "so you have, in the stockade outside, a gang of runaway slaves like yourself? And among them, not one black hand is



"*W*HY, MAN, HE COOED, FINGERING
THE BIG DIRK."



clean of murder — or worse. And you would think to fear Alexander Buccleugh with the like of that? Why, man," he cooed, fingering the big dirk thrust into his belt, "there have been times when 'twas Alexander Buccleugh's trade to slaughter men, any one of whom could have met your beggarly crew unarmed, and silenced them. The whip, man, the whip is the thing we use on slaves. They fear their masters, and no other weapon is needed."

Junius's nostril flickered, and his eye, with the tawny white ball, glared upon Dad. But when he would have spoken, the Spaniard restrained him, and answered instead:

"Your Excellency is pleased to be merry. Well, well, when we are all grandees of Spain together, our colonel of grenadiers here may return the jest."

"But mind, the squaw here has your life in her hands, and I'd never trust a woman," said Junius, as they passed out.

CHAPTER IX.

WHY THUNDERBOLT WAS BORN

"As he rade ower yonder hill
And down yon dowie den,
There was a roar in Clyde water
Wad fear'd a hunder men.

"O roaring Clyde, ye roar ower loud,
Your streams are wondrous strang;
Make me your wrack as I come back —
But spare me as I gang."

WHEN they were gone, the old man, frantic at thought of the shame with which he knew himself covered in his daughter's eyes, and torn, it is equally sure, with the disgust and horror which he himself felt for the thing he was about to do, stood long in the doorway, looking after the disorderly retreat of the negroes.

"So," he said finally, turning upon her, "you come down to spy on me. And now you set yourself up in judgment over your father, and call him all the villains you can imagine, because he would fain place the mark of rank upon your brother's brow. 'Tis little you care. An Indian was your mother, and an Indian you'll be to the end of the chapter. But for Salequah, I will make of him —"

"Dad," interrupted Lit in a broken voice, "I

have said none of those things to you. I'm hungry; I'm worn out; and Mistress Golightly," — a sob caught in the girl's throat, — "she's lamed, an' for life, as I believe, an' 'twas I did it to her, with travelling down here. Why, in the name of God! Dad, what would I want to harm you for? Will you go and get the mare? I tied her over by the far spring."

The old man looked at her miserably a minute; then, without a word of denial or reproach, went. It was characteristic of the reckless courage of both that neither he nor Lit feared for an instant, she to be left alone, nor he to leave her, with the possibility of Junius's band returning.

When Dad came back from seeing to the comfort of the mare, instead of resuming the denunciations which he had originally begun as a sort of defence against her unspoken reproaches, he sat heavily down, and hid his face in his hands.

Lit looked at him. She had examined the supply of liquor, and she knew that her one hope was to induce him to drink enough that she might get away — get back to St. Simons and warn the garrison. This planned attack of the Spaniard she knew they were apprehending. But of the details they could know nothing, and this treachery within their camp must surely work their utter destruction unless they could be warned in time.

"Oh, dear Heaven!" she groaned within herself, "why should my flesh creep at doing this thing? He will often be drunk himself. 'Tis to save more than his life; for I had far liefer see him dead than see him lead the cruel Spaniard against our people. And yet — and yet — all my life long I

have begged and prayed and besought Heaven that he might not do so; and now must I be the one to coax him into taking more of the stuff?

"Dad," she said finally in a heart-broken voice, "I'm that worn out that I wish you'd give me" — she choked — "a bit of liquor."

"What, lass!" he returned, with a flash of his usual reckless good humour, "you come to it? You, who would never taste a drop? Well, 'tis a brave medicine for all the ills of this world — though it sends many a poor fellow too soon to taste the ills of the next."

He poured, as she hoped he would, a mug for her and one for himself. Under pretence of getting some water from the well to dilute the liquor in her cup, Lit threw hers out, and complaining that she had spilled most of it, asked him for more. This jogging his memory, he himself drank again, turned his back sullenly upon her, bade her lie down and sleep, and addressed himself strongly to his evillest counsellor, the jug.

She crouched upon a hide which had been spread in a corner. Once, when she had lain so a quarter of an hour or such a matter, and Dad seemed to have fallen to brooding and forgotten the jug, Lit rose and again asked for liquor in a voice that fainted with pain and grief.

Again, he gave it jocularly, and returned to sit himself. Thereafter she watched him with fear-struck eyes. Would he be long about it? Would he drink enough to make him sleep heavily? Would he — as often before — barely drink sufficient to make of him a dangerous maniac? In the hour she spent so, Lit lived a year of torture.

Once, when Dad drowsed beside the emptied mug, the girl crept back and, with tears running down her face and, "O God, forgive me!" silently filled the cup which, later, he roused and drank. This act was the bitterest thing life had ever done to Lit Buccleugh, or asked of her.

Finally, after some groaning and swearing, some getting up and moving restlessly about, the old man threw himself down upon the pile of saddles and equipments, and slumbered fitfully. Lit rose from her couch, creeping by inches, slowly, stealthily past him. She was not in much terror, for he kept no jailer's eye upon her, seeing that she had no way to leave the Cowpens save upon horseback, and he lay stretched on the pile of saddles, bridles, and equipments, no animal to ride save poor, injured Mistress Cuddly, or the great black horse, whom none but himself and Salequah had ever backed.

This same horse was the objective point of Lit's present errand. Her father's head was on the skirts of her saddle, his left arm twisted in her bridle-leathers. Her only hope was to find the black horse in the pen; catch him, if such a thing were possible; mount him, and ride him with the simple Indian bridle, a rope around the lower jaw.

Once outside the room, she breathed more freely, and ran toward the pen. The black horse knew her at once; she had often fed him, and he came in the dark, nosing against her dress and begging for salt or some dainty. "Aye, my man," she said, reaching up to find if by chance he had a halter on, "but 'twill be another story when I try mounting of ye."

Finding no rope, she bent down and, laboriously,

with the knife she carried, cut and haggled the hem from her homespun skirt, twisted it, and formed a clumsy but strong rope bridle. As she did so, the great horse backed away, snorting. Her movements were mysterious to him, and he was not reassured when she came up and clasped his mane, trying in vain to reach the high backward-drawn head, and slip her noose over the lower jaw. The gate she had fastened, fearing that he would escape her in the struggle which she knew to be impending, hoping that, once on his back, she should be able to knock away the stick she had set against it.

The black horse glared at her, and decided against her. In a moment of comparative indecision on his part, she twisted both hands hard in his sweeping mane. Using her weight as well as her strength, she drew down his head and, once in reach of his nose, grasped with her free hand the nostrils.

Then came the struggle. Around — around — around the pen he swung himself from side to side, striving to beat her against the logs which formed its barrier. And the girl was well aware that the least misstep, the smallest stumble, and she would be down under those cruel hoofs, the life stamped out of her in the twinkling of an eye.

Finally, maddened with his ill success, the great horse threw himself; and the girl, partly jerked by the fall and partly yielding of intention, came down with him, her knees upon his head. As he lay there quiet for an instant, as a horse will, she drew her thick, strong scarf of tow linen through his mouth and knotted it securely around the jaw.

Then, indeed, he was angry, offended, outraged. He regained his feet with one movement of his

whole body, ran back to the length of the rope, reared, and came on with battling forefeet. She knew that her life hung on the toss of a penny in this matter; and yet, so terrific were the risks before it and behind, that to mount this rebellious creature seemed to her but a little matter.

She had meant to have leaped upon him as he got up, but he had defeated her purpose by his quickness. There was nothing for it but to try again; and now, as he ran furiously back the scarf's length and, feeling it pinch his lip on the jerk, came charging at her again, she evaded the direct onset, gave his head a sidewise wrench, once more seized first mane, then nostrils, and, as before, by throwing her arm over his neck, her weight on his head, her hand twisting his tender nostrils, threw him — or helped him to throw himself. And when he rose this time, with a leap and a snort, she was clinging to his back, her knees gripping his sides, one hand twisted in his mane, one straining on her scarf Indian bridle.

With this his frenzy culminated. He tore around the small enclosure like a thing possessed. Each time they passed the gate, she strove to strike away its prop; each time missed it and barely held her place upon his back. Finally, having run until he despaired of dislodging her by mere running, he came up to the gate in a thundering gallop, looked contemptuously at it, rose to it like a bird, and they were over it and off up the homeward trail like a rock from a catapult.

Girl and horse burst out into the open night-world and, though nothing could have been further from the black's calculations, had started upon the des-

perate mission Lit had planned while lying there at the Cowpens.

The path was between thickets of palmetto. These cut at the girl like blades as she shot between them, and the two roared up the track through the night at a blinding pace. In the whirl of this first mad burst of speed, Lit could maintain but one idea — to hold — to grasp the great barrel with her knees, twist her strong fingers into the mane, bow her head low and hold for dear life.

The night had fallen black and gusty; the wind bawled hoarsely past her ears like a brow-beating, bellowing voice. She was in a chaos, an inferno of sound and speed. Suddenly from a near-by thicket, Mistress Golightly, who had probably been left outside the corral, lifted head and heel, neighed a plaintive greeting, and skurried limpingly after them. They were in the trail for Cumberland, but Lit, after some moments (or perhaps, as seemed more likely to her, some hours) of this terrific speed, bore inland to find a ford or ferryage across Pamuskey Creek, the Mistress following as best she could. She hoped to find ferryage, for the creek was in fact a river, and a treacherous stream at that. And she knew not at what moment she might ride headlong into a Spanish camp; for turn or check or influence her horse she could not.

It was beginning to storm now, a black mid-summer thunder-shower, with flashes of lightning; and in one of these she saw the Pamuskey, an inky line right before her horse's feet. "Lord be good to me!" she said. "I seem picked out to fight wi' black deils this night. First, 'twas Weeping Moon, a sullen deil, and black enough; then, Chunkey —

who might be daughter to her — and Junius, a slippery, dancing black fiend, indeed; and Dad — oh!" she shivered, "and his familiar deil of drink — drink that *I* gave him; then this black demon of his, that is just as much in mind to kill me as Junius was, and more like to do it. Now comes this cruel, black witch of a storm, and the black water to swim. Shall we win through, my girl?" And she turned to glance back where the Mistress's white shape flickered amid the blackness around her. The mare had again and again made up lost distance, and caught them up, in those intervals when the black stallion turned furious and he and Lit had to fight it out. In a long blaze of lightning, Lit now saw the mare turning off on a trail toward the coast and Cumberland; while the black horse, as fearless as his wild sire, took Pamuskey water breast-high and began swimming from the first stroke.

"Oh, you're off for home and safety, are you, Polly?" the girl called a little ruefully to the white mare. "Well, I reckon I must go on. I beant quite come to the end of all things. I can't be killed this night, for I've got that preacher the old man gave me to wed yet," and she laughed to herself, on the crest of one of the big horse's upheavals, all alone in the black night. She slid from his back and swam beside him, one hand clutching a streamer of his mane.

The first wild burst of speed lasted probably half an hour. It was all too much like violent madness for Lit to form any judgment. But after the Pamuskey, the frantic plunges, as of a wounded buck, settled into a long-reaching, dead run. This gave

his rider a chance to get her wits together, and estimate the task before her.

There were no stars to judge by, but she guessed that it was not beyond ten o'clock. Forty-five or forty-six miles would, she thought, take her to Fort St. Simons; and she must make it, if it might be done, by dawn. She tried now to modify the speed of her horse, and did succeed in doing so; but, though spent of his first blazing resentment, and pretty well breathed, there were yet times when he strove suddenly to be rid of her in any fashion, and would have bolted from the trail into the thickets to scrape her off against the low-hanging boughs.

They were nearing the Satillo now. Ferryage must be found here, and Lit was unspeakably glad to see by the light which a late-risen, waning moon glimpsed, from tattered edges of flying cloud, the ferryman's hut in a clearing upon the bank.

But would the black horse halt to her hand? That would he not. She put him at the door — dismount she dared not, but hoped to strike upon its boards in passing — all to no good. He swept by it at a thundering gallop, and only by dint of pulling desperately did she wheel him into the clearing at all.

Once there, he ran at full speed around its edges. The girl shouted now: "Boat! — ferry! — halloo!" and again, "Boat! — boat! — hoo-ee! hoo-ee-ee!"

Three times she swooped yelling around the house, apparently much to the liking of the black horse; and the third time she passed the doorway, a sleepy man stood in it and inquired: "Is't the Spanish — or the Indians — or the devil?"

Set across Satillo water, into whose ferry he had been dragged by the jaw, the black horse began to have a wholesome respect for his rider. When she had forded a stream or two more, showing no fear of himself or the water, and was come to the ferry at the Little Satillo, he was sufficiently complaisant — though she dared not yet dismount — to permit himself to be guided up to the ferryman's door, where she beat upon the boards and called the man forth.

He was a low-headed, black-faced, surly fellow, who unbent for a moment to admire her horse. It needed all her courage to keep Lit's voice steady, as she cautioned him to look out for the mounted Creeks who were of her party, but who, being less well-horsed, had dropped somewhat behind her. They would certainly be up within half an hour, she assured him, and must be set across without delay, since all three were bearing dispatches from different points to Oglethorpe at St. Simons. She drew a freer breath, as Thunderbolt sprang from the boat up the northward bank.

Once, as though conjured up by the thunder of the big horse's hoofs, a man sprang out into the trail, leaped at the animal's head with a shout, and would have halted them. Lit had no choice in the matter; Thunderbolt did the choosing. He slackened not one whit in his stride, and she listened to hear the crunching of bones as the man was ridden over. But he slipped lithely aside like a shadow.

"An Indian," Lit reflected. "No white man could have been so quick."

She crouched close to the horse's mane, looking momentarily for an arrow or a musket-ball to follow

her. But whether her assailant were unarmed, or whether he had found from their instant's encounter that she was not one whom he sought, she rode free.

Her next ford was a narrow, swift creek, running between high, steep banks, an ugly crossing even in daylight and to one who knew it well, though it might almost have been bridged by one of the great cypress-trees. At the top of the bank, for the first time, the black horse hesitated; and when she forced him down, he drew back snorting at the water's edge. He was beginning to be weary; and enough water is enough, even of a July night, when you are running as you have heretofore only run in dreams.

Lit eagerly seized the occasion to assume a masterful — even a browbeating — tone and attitude. She dug her heel into his side, and drove him in with a shout. He took the water badly; a sunken log tripped him; they were whirled, sucked, beaten by this swifter current, and landed a dozen rods down-stream in a palmetto thicket.

It was, however, worth the trouble and danger; for after it, Thunderbolt belonged to her. The trial was over; he was hers, as gentle to her hand as was ever his mother, the white mare.

Then began a thing that was cruel to Lit's tender heart. Madly as he had run at the outset, wastefully as he had flung his breath and speed along the trail, she must — now, when he trusted her — push him relentlessly; first, with patting and encouraging; later, with cries and digging her heel against his side.

How the latter part of that ride was made, Lit scarcely knew. Half-swooning with exhaustion,

every muscle wrenched and pounded and strained, maddened with sheer weariness, in deep distress of mind, she seemed to herself only a creature sent out with motion in it. There was no thought, no sensation, no hope, even for miles and miles, as she went on and on.

Her overfraught heart gave way and she wept aloud, abstractedly, to the distraught night; then started to hear her own loud sobs, and wiped the streaming tears with her sleeve, or upon the fantastically dancing masses of her dark hair. This hair which had been drenched in the I muskey, dried — even her soaked clothing dried, what with the warm wind whooping past them, and her fevered body within.

The horse's mad plunges had loosened the hair from its braids, and now some sudden up-swelling of wind would take it like a great cloud above her head, drop it, and dash and wind it around her face like a veil, till she fought it away that she might see as much as could be seen in the first pale strugglings of dawn.

The magnificent pace of the great black was lessened to pitiful short bounds, like those of a spent, wounded hart. He gathered his trembling legs and launched himself forward for each leap as though it might be his last.

Suddenly, just as a quivering spear of light came up out of the sea, which Lit could discern in glimpses through the thicket to her right, Turtle River opened up dim, gray, and mysterious before her. So near the coast, this stream is an estuary, the further bank faintly conjectured from the near one.

The girl drew her panting horse into a shambling trot; her eyes roved wildly along the bank seeking a boat. Suddenly, from the near-by thicket, came the sharp command, "Halt!"

The accent was broad Scotch, and Lit deemed it safe to answer to the challenge. "Who goes there?" "A friend — with letters for the general!"

The man who had spoken, a cattle-hunter for the army, was leaving the thicket with deliberate Scotch caution, when Lit launched herself from the great horse's back, caught the fellow by the sleeve and shook him, crying, "For God's sake move, man! I have news that means life or death to the town of Frederica — and all that be within it!"

At this energetic summons a half-dozen companions joined the sentry in the road.

"And what would you have of us, mistress?" the first speaker inquired. "The Spanish be off the bay at St. Simons — aye, two an' thirty sail of them — and there is no ferryage to the Island for a soul this day."

"Set me across the river," pleaded Lit — "me and the horse."

"That will I right gladly — except the beastie, which, by your leave, mistress, needs a pistol-ball; for I am thinking he will no lie through to the other side."

"Nay, I will not — so there!" Lit burst out. "He goes with me, or I go not at all. Leave your men here, if need be, and set us over. Oh! my poor, bonny, brave fellow!" She wept as she led the stumbling, trembling animal on board the boat, crying, "'Twas Lit who put you to your death like this!"

There was room in the broad periagua for all; the rowers gave way with a will. But Turtle River is wide; half-way across, the great beast gave a groan, came to his knees and died with his head against Lit's dress, she sobbing over him as though he were a friend.

"Poor, bonny laddie—an' 'twas not his war—what cared he for Spanish or English—but they wouldna' let him live his bonny life—he must e'en be killed—Lit, Lit must kill him. Oh, oh, oh!"

As they neared the other shore the sound of cannon began to come across the water, and Lit's impatience increased. "The Spanish ha' been standing on and off the bar for a week," the old Scotchman told her, "and now, like enough, they have taken the flood and gone over. Best stay with us since the horse is dead. We will push up where we can see them without ourselves being seen, and if so be there comes a chance to get you—and our news—to the general, we will surely do it."

And so it came about that Lit Buckaloo saw the battle of St. Simons from the water side. She saw the great proud fleet of thirty-two sail, two large bows leading, dash in upon Oglethorpe's flotilla of cutters and guard-boats, engage them, sink one. The periagua-full wept, prayed, swore, appealing to the sex and religious convictions of its occupants.

Finally, after a four hours' fight, the Spanish ships swept past them all, and up the Altamaha with a stiff, stern breeze chasing.

The old Scotchman looked doggedly on, determined to find some advantage in the defeat.

"Weel," he said, "the beggarly dons ha' left us a clear coast to land you on, mistress."

But poor Lit's horrified eyes were following the fleet up the river. Though she knew they would meet resistance, though she felt that her information might yet be in time, it now seemed as though those great fluttering gulls of ships were carrying instant destruction to those two so dear to her.

"Oh, God keep us!" she groaned, as the rowers swung the boat out across the narrow sound, heading for the fort.

CHAPTER X.

THE BATTLE OF BLOODY MARSH

"THEY closed full fast on every side,
No slackness there mote be;
And evir more the rede blude ran
Under the greenwood tree."

LIT finally reached Oglethorpe's presence, spent, staggering, almost blind with exhaustion and misery. Coming close to him, she poured out, in her direct way, her story of the Spanish spy, and the plot to blow up the magazine. At the end, "I pray you," she gasped, "let me go on to warn those at Frederica!"

"My dear child," the general remonstrated, "I will not send so over-worn a messenger as yourself. The swiftest among my Indian runners is already despatched. Aldonado, if he returns, will be clapt in irons at once, and the magazine narrowly watched lest there be others in the plot. Do you lie down now, and strive to get some repose. We have held a council of war, and decided to dismantle this fort as near as may be, spike the guns, burst the cohorns and make what speed is possible to Frederica."

A kindly old Scotchwoman, herself nurse and laundress at the garrison, came up and put an arm

around the girl's swaying form to lead her to a bed.

"D'ye think I'm going blind, mother?" moaned Lit, as she went, trembling and staggering. "I was never ailing in my life; and I — I dare not fall sick or die now — or go blind. Is there aught there? — or there? — is there naught around us? — for I see naught." And before the old woman, who had phlegmatically piloted her along to the bed, could make any reply, poor Lit fell upon the blessed couch, already asleep.

She knew no more until she was aroused at midnight to mount a horse and accompany the retreating forces in their seven-mile march up the island. They took the only route possible, and one which was perfectly safe; for the Spanish, even were they landed, could not have gotten to them through the morasses.

Lit had been riding for some time in silence in the warm, odorous dark, the sea-wind whispering in the palmettoes beside the way. She was conscious of a multitude of soft sounds, indicative of an army in motion; the creaking of saddle-leathers, the clink of arms, the sound of hoofs, the occasional groaning of a wounded man, the flash of a lantern up or down the invisible column. She was vaguely aware that one walked beside her, a hand on the horse's mane.

Finally, "I pray you, sir," she questioned of those unseen footsteps sounding by her side in the dark, "at what time are we like to reach Frederica, do you think?" And was astonished to be answered by the general's voice, "We will make it before daylight, never fear; and 'tis owing to you, my brave

girl, that we shall find a fort standing there awaiting us."

She discovered with the first faint glimmer of dawn that she was mounted on the general's charger, while he walked beside her. Arriving at the fort, they found Diana and the baby, with some of the officers' wives and children, gathered in the building used for a court of justice. The fort being well-nigh impregnable from the water side, and the walled town lying between it and a land assault, this was deemed the safest place. Day was dawning when the forces from St. Simons found themselves within the gates of Frederica.

Oglethorpe considered that his only chance was to act now (as he little liked to act) upon the defensive. He set the main body of his forces to work upon the fortifications, strengthening them in every possible detail. Nearly a hundred scouts circled about the invading troops, striking a blow or taking a prisoner where they could, and bringing in continual news of the enemy's movements. These informed the general that, on the evening of the sixth, the Spanish had landed at Gascoigne's Bluff, where they had fortified themselves and encamped upon shore. At this point, they were four miles below Frederica by water, but cut off from it by morasses and impenetrable woods in such a way that, to reach it, they would have to go down the coast toward St. Simons, there turn, and come up the length of the island, following indeed the exact route which Oglethorpe's forces had taken. Arriving before the town, they would be obliged to approach it by a narrow trail cut through dense oak woods, and upon which not more than two could

walk abreast. This precluded the bringing of cannon or baggage, and it is probable that, with their arrangements concerning the blowing up of the magazine, they thought much more of the attack from the water side, and would make little attempt toward an effectual demonstration by land.

The coast lookout brought in word that the Spanish admiral had hoisted the bloody flag upon his ship. A shudder ran through the little garrison at this news. "No quarter, is it, you murdering robbers!" cried Lit, shaking a prophetic finger toward the Altamaha. "Aye, but not to us — not to us. To you be it — down your own decks may the blood run!"

All through the sixth, Indian and Highland scouts and small squads of Rangers were coming in with the news that they had met here and there small parties of Spanish, evidently spying out the land. This served to keep the garrison at Frederica upon the alert; but it was not until the morning of the seventh that Captain Noble Jones, with a small detachment of regulars and Indians, being on a reconnoitring expedition, fell in with the advance-guard of the Spanish column coming up from St. Simons by the narrow way already described. These he made prisoners, and from them received the information that the main army was on the march. An Indian runner conveyed the news immediately to Oglethorpe.

As he entered the fort, the Highlanders were being paraded under arms. The general announced this information to them with a shout, sprang upon a horse which stood saddled near by, and ordering four platoons of his own regiment to follow, rushed

forth. He reached the scene of battle with two or three of Toonahowi's Creeks, and a Highland man who had outrun the others.

The fighting was hand to hand, the Spanish being here in a small opening. The general took two prisoners with his own hands. Toonahowi, being shot in the right arm by a Spanish captain, drew his pistol with his left hand and shot his assailant through the heart. The general pursued the fugitives more than a mile, halted on an advantageous piece of ground, and, being encumbered with a number of prisoners whom he wished to take back to the fort, posted the men of his own regiment and the Highlanders in a dense wood, ambushing the road by which the main body of the Spanish must pass to reach the fort, and himself returned with all speed to Frederica to make such preparation as was possible to repel the invaders.

Highlander and Georgian, Creek and Cherokee, they lay close in the warm greenness of the palmetto thickets, their scouts intently listening for the advance of the enemy. But it needed not the trained ear of the scout to detect the approach of that column. Three Spanish captains, with a hundred grenadiers, two hundred foot-soldiers, besides their negro and Indian followers, came up the narrow green defile through the woods with bands playing, banners flying, and fresh, gay uniforms, danced upon by the chequering dapples of sunlight through the live-oaks.

Reaching the savannah, whose border walls of green were the ramparts behind which Oglethorpe's forces lay, the Spanish deployed, stacked arms, and began — what military manœuvre, does the reader

suppose? Why, the building of fires and the preparation of what was either a delayed breakfast or an early midday refreshment!

The officers in command of the ambushed forces awaited the favourable moment. Then the signal to attack was raised by Charles Mackay — a Highland bonnet held up on a claymore.

A Highland bonnet on a claymore! Valour's own cognisance. On what coasts, in what rock-ribbed gorges, beside what outlandish waters, on what impassable mountain heights, in what deadly fens and marshes, has the Highland bonnet led to bloody death — with the silent, savage attack, or with the pipes screaming beside it! India knows the terror of its sign; the Crimea, Africa, these wild Americas, wherever English adventure has set a foot, Scottish valour has aided to make that foothold secure. And never, in any of these places where Scottish bones lie, did this signal lead to more complete victory than in the action which has gone down in history as the battle of Bloody Marsh, or Bloody Bend.

Attacked by an enemy they could not see, the Spanish ran to their arms, but were shot down even as they ran. They attempted repeatedly to form; but the English platoons burst through the thicket with levelled bayonets, and the panic-stricken foe fled in every direction. The Rangers and Highlanders, gathering up the loaded muskets which had been left on the ground, fired them after their owners.

Down the green path, up which they had come to the music of their own drums, the Spaniards fled, with the Highland shout, the Indian war-whoop, and

the hurrahs of the Rangers ringing after them. Some ran into the marshes, where they mired and were taken prisoners, if so fortunate as to be attacked by white men, or slain and scalped if they fell into the hands of the Cherokees.

That green lane down which they ran was a gauntlet, along which they were harried with tumult, hacked and mutilated with sword and fire. Some turned aside into the thickets and were lost, only to be found later and taken prisoners. But a pitiful remnant escaped to the Spanish camp. The commanding officer was mortally wounded. They had lost in officers and men, killed or taken prisoners, nearly two hundred.

During the confusion of the skirmish, word went to Oglethorpe at Frederica that his men were being defeated and driven back by the Spanish. He hastened with two platoons to reinforce them, and coming upon the ground of victory when it was red with the blood of the vanquished, he promoted the young officers who had gained it, there on the very field of their valour.

But not even with this signal victory could so small a force remain secure in the presence of so overwhelming an enemy. The same troops which had gained this victory pursued the flying remnant of the invaders to a causeway over the marsh, within a mile of the Spanish camps. They found that the enemy had entrenched themselves in the dismantled fort of St. Simons, and having no artillery with which to attack a fortified position, the general returned to Frederica.

His men were jubilant. Victory beyond belief had crowned their arms; but in the commander's heart

there could be nothing but apprehension which approached close to despair. He showed in his letters and diary of this period that he appreciated to the fullest the terrific responsibility laid upon him. Not only the lives of all with him depended upon the successful issue of all his enterprises; but the very life of the colony itself. He was, in fact, hemmed in by a force ten times as great as his own. While the Spanish held the river, no support, no succour could come to him. He was aware also that they must know approximately his numbers and situation; and that, with this knowledge, they should fail to close in and crush him, he could not believe.

While matters were in this state, information was brought to him of dissension in the Spanish camp. The Cuban and Florida troops were encamped apart. Desperation counseled him to attack them separately. His attempt to do so was frustrated by the treachery of a spy, a Frenchman in the English forces, who fired his gun while they were stealing upon the enemy, and deserted to the Spanish ranks.

Of this reverse the general made such brilliant use as brought further victory from the very clutch of defeat. He wrote a most ingenious letter to this deserting spy, purporting to be from a friend who was supposed to be still with Oglethorpe, making references to the money the spy had received from the English commander, in return for which the Spanish were to be piloted by him up under the secret batteries placed in the woods ready to destroy them, and mentioning large forces which were then on the way from Carolina to join Oglethorpe.

Nothing but their fears could have counseled the Spanish commanders to believe this story. They

did put such credit in it as made of their defeat a panic rout. Reaching Fort William, which they knew to have a very small garrison, they attacked it. But heroic Alexander Stuart, having received Oglethorpe's message to hold out desperately, repulsed them — with sixty men in his garrison!

Oglethorpe had the pleasure of relieving Stuart, beating off the Spanish, and following down after them; of seeing the whole great fleet fly before his pitiful handful of guard-boats, and of pursuing them even to the St. John's and within sight of Augustine!

Whitefield rose up in his church, and was moved to one of his marvellous flights of eloquence over this expedition. "Our deliverance from the hands of the Spaniard," he said, "is such as could only be paralleled in the Old Testament. They had cast lots and determined to give no quarter. They were for the Carolinas, and were of the mind to put in and take Georgia on their way. But, behold, 'the race is not to the swift, nor the battle to the strong.' Providence ruleth all things. They are wonderfully repelled, and in a marvellous manner are they sent away. 'A little band chased a thousand; and a small one overcome a large people.'"

CHAPTER XI.

SALEQUAH

"My little sonne, mine only sonne,
Will ye no answer me?
Gif I hae killed mine only sonne,
My heart will break in three."

AS a group of the women and children were crossing the parade-ground to the fort, just after the action of Bloody Marsh, a party of Indian warriors came whooping and capering in at the gates, laden with their usual bloody trophies — for though Oglethorpe, more persistent, or more influential, than other white commanders, had been able to prevail against the torturing and mutilating of prisoners, he could not expect but that the Indians would take scalps from their dead enemies.

The women were hurrying on, with averted faces, when Lit — hardier than the others — glanced back, halted, and crying, "Don't look, mistress — go on! Here's some to-do — I'll see to it," returned toward the entrance.

That which had attracted her eye was a head, severed from the trunk, borne upon a tall lance — or spear — staff by a Cherokee warrior, who was chanting that this man was his enemy of old, and in the guise of a friend had betrayed him and slain his

brother. Fascinated and revolted, Lit gazed upon the head borne aloft. It was a black face, with short crisp hair above its temples, the eyes half-closed, as though in insolent derision, the lips writhed back from the white teeth in a perpetual sneer. And in it Lit recognised the Spanish colonel of grenadiers, the emissary who had been most eager for her life, Sir Paris's late attendant and gentleman of the bedchamber, Belinda's bearer, the Pluto that had carried that dusky Proserpine, Chunkey, from the ken of her owners — Junius.

And by that same token, who was this dwarfed man, or ancient-looking boy, who came limping in the rear, with bound hands and sullen eyes down-cast? Who but Chunkey's self?

Lit hurried forward, her glance flinching from that ghastly head whose drooping eyelids gave it the grotesque appearance of looking down with scorn upon the crowd beneath, spoke to Chunkey's captor, and laid a hand upon the woman's shoulder.

When they last met, Chunkey had been at Lit's throat like a snarling cur. Now, according to the ways of the world, was the time for vengeance, for reprisal. No such thought was in Lit's mind. She had immediately informed Chunkey's captor that he had taken a woman, not a man; and when the Cherokee disgustedly relinquished his prisoner, Lit said to her: "There is your mistress, Chunkey, do you want to go to her?"

Chunkey raised her fierce, sullen eyes to her questioner's face, then softened a little as she looked where Diana walked, the fair-haired child led in her hand.

"Iss, I go to her. I carry little boy," she said.

And so it was that she selected her own office, one in which she proved surprisingly capable.

Diana and her party remained for near a month in Frederica; then, the general having given her, as he had promised, and much sooner than he had expected, a country safe for women and children to travel through, she was for setting out — August though it was — to follow up such faint and broken clues as the weeks in the garrison town had brought her.

Chunkey astonished them all (after having been with Diana for a week, dropping back day by day into her position and her former manner and bearing, half of dog-like fidelity, and half of indifferent *brusquerie*) by giving them the most direct information they had yet had. She was in the attack upon Moosa, she told them, dressed in men's clothes, as at Bloody Marsh, and carrying Junius's extra arms and ammunition. She saw Robert that night and twice afterward, as a prisoner in the possession of some Spanish Indians. Her statements bore every evidence of truthfulness, and Lit at once urged that Diana and the party go down with her to the St. Mary's plantation.

"'Tis there, trust me, 'tis there, mistress, that we shall be able to find out what may be in this tale of Chunkey's. And 'tis the only way — the only place — a woman, a white lady, can come close to the place of that year's battles. And beside, you can have there, through Dad and through me, word with all the lower Creeks, and indeed with almost any Indian. There we could find a way to bargain even with the Spanish Indians, and so, maybe, with the Spaniards themselves."

Her faithful heart was torn with anxiety as to how that father, always beloved, and now, as it almost seemed, doubly near in his degradation and falling away from the path of honour, might be faring.

General Oglethorpe, knowing nothing of Dad's wavering, (for Lit's knowledge of her father's contemplated defection had been a secret locked in her own breast,) did not oppose the expedition.

The Spaniards were routed and flung back; their Indians reduced, through sheer terror, to submission heretofore unknown, so that the waters and the country into which Diana's party went were as safe and peaceful as the neighbourhood of Savannah itself.

A great flat-bottomed periagua of the Company's was going down to Cumberland Sound at the mouth of the St. Mary's — perhaps further south — and would take the party. At the Cumberland place they could get both a boat of Buckaloo's and Creek rowers.

They left Frederica at dawn, went down the inland passage, arrived at Dad's place, and were off up the St. Mary's the next morning. It was twenty miles and more, as the river wound, and against a strong current.

They rowed all morning, then landed for lunch and rest under a group of stately live-oaks, where Return ran about and played games with two of the Creek rowers who were young fellows and of that smiling friendly type more often seen among the Southern Indians than among the tribes further north.

Lit put aside all the baby's invitations and chal-

lenges, to his Majesty's great perplexity. Her disquiet grew visibly, and when they had reëmbarked and were once more moving toward the home plantation, apprehension, dread lest she be not forgiven her apparent defection and the death of Thunderbolt, quite mastered her. Diana, having striven vainly to allay the girl's uneasiness, finally desisted and left her to herself, deeming it the greater kindness. Now they again rowed, for probably an hour and a half, in the naked, burning, deadly heat. The silent, dense, palpitating air promised a thunder-shower, which had not yet come, and the nerves of all living creatures were on edge with the longing for it.

At about three o'clock in the afternoon they finally reached the landing — a dock of some pretensions, built of cypress logs — in front of old Dad's straggling settlement. Lit sprang out of the boat the moment it touched, leaving Zubley and the Indians to bring up mother and child. She said hurriedly and deprecatingly to Diana, as she moved toward the house, "I will go find my father, mistress; let me see him first."

But even as she spoke, from the front of the house came a staggering, distraught figure, and Buckaloo ran forward, his hands out, crying to her, "Lit — Lit! Come, oh, come! He calls for you every moment — ah! — that it breaks my heart to hear him! Oh, lass! he's going away from us — my son — my bairnie — my chieftain!"

The low, fortress-like house was built round a court, which opened toward the broad sweep of the St. Mary's. The thick walls were generally a perfect defence against the heat of the climate; and

always if coolness were to be found, it would be in the shaded courtyard which overlooked the river.

There they had brought the sick child, and laid him upon a couch near its outer edge. Motionless, by one of the corners of his bed, hiding herself from him in its draperies, Weeping Moon crouched; for he had said earlier in the day that she was a wicked woman, and he did not wish to see her; and old Dad had driven her from the room with hard words. Now, dishevelled, trembling from head to foot, the father stood between the two women and begged that they do something for his boy.

Lit went forward without a word, kneeled down by the child and kissed him; and feeble as he was, the great liquid eyes glowed and lightened upon her in a perfect ecstasy of gladness. The parched lips smiled and whispered her name.

She lifted his small hot hands and laid them about her neck. "It is fever," she said, looking up at Dad, "swamp fever."

"Nay!" cried Buckaloo with a groan, "'tis the judgment of God, lass. Fever, say you?" and he sat down upon the other side of the bed, gripping its edge in his hands, and watching the child's face.

Return had gone to sleep from the heat and weariness of travel. His mother went with him into one of the rooms and laid him down, bidding Chunkey take a branch and keep the flies and mosquitoes from him while he slept, then back to the dying boy in the courtyard. She brought a basin and cloths, and signed to Lit that she should bathe his brow, which, when she did, he seemed feebly glad, and his glance rested sweetly upon Diana, whose lovely face he knew. But after a

time, he turned from her, rolling his beautiful dark head feverishly on the pillow, and looking piteously at his father. "Lift me, Dad," he moaned.

Buckaloo took him upon his breast, and walked up and down, stark mad with the agony of it.

"For two nights they say he has walked so with him to quiet him," whispered Lit to Diana. "Salequah has been sick but three days, and he has suffered no hand to touch him but Dad's. Poor Dad!"

Suddenly they saw the man stop in his walk, throw back his head with its long black hair, and with a great cry raise the child, as a priest lifts the Host before the altar. "O God!" he said, "I had but one — but one pet lamb to me — my bairn — my only son! And will you take him so?" And they knew that the boy was dead.

In the strain and stress of it, as was always so with Buckaloo, reason gave way. "Speak to me, my bairn — O my son — my little lad!" he cried. "Dad's bairnie, then. Dost hear father? There's my brave young fighting man, my Mico o' the Creeks. O bairnie — bairnie — bairnie — O little laddie — O my son!"

Lit, in a corner of the court, her head on Diana's shoulder, wept to merciful exhaustion. Dad suffered none — not even her — to approach or touch the child.

Evening drew on, cool and cloudy. The rain had fallen, but not here. There were soft breaths of moist wind coming in from seaward.

The man looked out upon the shadowed coolness which it seemed might have brought life to the dead child in his arms; and of a sudden he sprang up and ran with him down to the river, and on to the

outermost end of the rude pier. There he sat, his white face with its burning eyes lifted to the hurrying clouds, the little rigid figure spread across his knees. And they could see his hands, flung up toward heaven, and hear him crying aloud, talking and pleading, muttering and singing.

Zubley, who had been attending to the practical matters of life as usual, and caring for little Return, now came to the women and asked, "Should not something be done for the poor soul? Will he not leap into the water?"

Lit was done weeping. "Nay," she answered, dry-eyed and quiet, "leave him be. 'Tis Dad's way. Wait; the frenzy will spend itself."

So they drew together in the courtyard, and watched till his head began to droop, and the cries came fainter. Then his daughter went down to him and took his hand and called his attention to the child on his knees, that he was really dead; and they came up to the house bearing the little son, and laid him down once more upon his bed.

And here presently came trotting from the inner room to his mother, Return, who had wakened renewed, his face rosy, fresh, and smiling as a cherub's face seen in clear water.

"Mistress," old Buckaloo was saying, "you have come to a very sad house. It is a house which hath lost its prop, for there will be no more sons to it."

"I would," said Diana, "that I had come earlier, that I might have been useful to you, sir. I have some skill in these matters."

"In the matter of a fever?" said old Dad, gently. "Why, yes, I think a fever may be dealt with. But this son of mine was taken from me because I was

not worthy to have him. You see, mistress, this lass who stands beside me here so quiet, so loving, and says naught. But she knows me to be a very bad man."

"O Dad!" begged Lit. "I know of no such thing as that. Pray do not say it."

"Why, yes," Dad urged, patiently, "I think you do, Lit. for you heard the basest of my plans. They have come to naught. What would a bad man's plans come to? Naught. So, my son, mistress, that was ever obedient to me — and most loving — will not rise now if I bid him. Yea, though I cry my heart out, and tear out mine eyes in my anguish, he will not rise and answer me. See how the schemes of the wicked are brought to nothing. I would have made my little lad a grandee of Spain. (Oh, she knows it — Lit knows well of it.) I would have made him a grandee of Spam, I say, so that his ancestry might be forgot. God knows that he was descended from a better man than any grandee of Spain. Yet I said, 'He is not to be a savage.'"

"I would not have a savage for my son — would I not? Then came God — and his angel, death, walking in the shadow behind him, says, 'Alexander Buccleugh, you have no son whatever.' And see, mistress, it is so." And he looked pitifully from the child to Diana's face.

Diana was, long ere this, melted to tears, and Return, seeing her weep, climbed to her knee and hung there, his own big blue eyes brimming, yet manfully restraining his grief, kissing and comforting her. "I think, sir," Diana sobbed, "that what people will do for their children is — is creditable to them."

"Aye?" queried Dad reflectively, "think you so? And yet you never knew the strain of holding in your arms a son so loved, but still belonging to that race which we white men despise. Now your son," and the desolate gaze of those great black eyes dwelt passingly upon the fair and dimpled example of what babyhood should be, "he is most beautiful and white. And for my baby — my boy — my little lad — he — but truly, mistress, he also was a bonnie, brave, handsome child!"

"Oh, indeed, most beautiful!" Diana eagerly declared.

"O, aye — beautiful — and a high heart — and all, my bairn. Yet could he not be white. So I said he should have riches and title and honours. Oh, fool! fool! Did I think by these — with lying and dishonour and a traitor's acts — and risk — Aye, a black villain I may be; but I would 'a' thought I would 'a' had some sense to me, and not juist ha' been a fool complete."

Later, when the squaws had taken the child's body in charge, Dad sat in the courtyard and talked with his white guests. Lit came to Diana and told her that Weeping Moon had begged pitifully to be allowed to dress and handle the little body, saying humbly that now he would not care, he would not be angry now. "I almost forgave her," said the pale girl, with red, swollen eyes, "and I could not refuse her. She is dressing him now."

Lit went to her father and, with her arm across his shoulders, asked some very gentle, guarded questions betraying that she thought Dad would still have much knowledge of the Spaniards and their plans. He was as simple and broken in his manner

as a little child. "Nay, lass, I know naught of them. When I woke and found you away with Thunderbolt — Aye, did you ride him to death? Well, 'twas a brave lass, and a brave deed she did. Yea, he is gone, like the little lad. Well, lass, when I found you away, and the horse, I trudged on foot back here. And then, like a bolt, my bairnie was struck down; and after it, I heeded no other thing on earth. I have seen none of them, nor heard from none of them."

"And what will you do now, Dad?" Lit asked him wistfully. She knew his emotional nature well enough to be sure he could not stay there, where every stone in the house-wall, and every path the little flying feet had trod, cried out to him of his dead son. "Here is Mistress Marshall, who seeks her husband, and I have as good as promised to go with her wherever is needful."

"No, my lass," he answered gently; "we will bury the little lad here, and I will go to General Oglethorpe. If he has need of me, I may find where-withal to wipe out this thing which cost my son his life."

"And what will she do?" Lit asked, nodding back to where Weeping Moon and her women were crouched about the child.

"She will go back to her people," Buckaloo answered with sudden decision. "I will gather her dowry; and this land, which was to have been my son's, shall go back to her tribe."

"You have another child, sir," Zubley suggested.

"My daughter," returned Buckaloo uneasily, and after a long pause, "should not inherit Indian lands." He seemed as though he would have spoken

further; closed his lips instead, dropped his head, and fell to brooding.

But why Salequah should have been deemed a suitable possessor of Creek lands, and not his sister, their father did not explain.

CHAPTER XII.

BY DEVIOUS WAYS

“‘WEELE be clad in palmer's weede,
Five palmers we will bee;
There is noe outlandish man will us abide,
Nor will us come nye.'
Then they rived east, and they rived west,
In many a straunge countrie.

THE clews offered to poor Diana were not few — they were heart-breakingly many. There had been white men seen in such various places; there had been more than one unrecognised body found. These latter clews were not often brought her, however; but if they were, she resolutely disregarded them.

After a final sifting of all that could be heard, she decided to return up the coast to Savannah, and go thence to the Salzburger settlement at Ebenezer, believing that the best clue was promised by a German boy who had been drummer in one of the Ranger companies, and was only recently returned from imprisonment, first in the castle of Augustine, and later as a slave of some Spanish Indians. She would stop at Savannah, see her uncle, make yet more definite arrangements as to her business affairs, then provide them all better for travelling, and be free to follow whatever leading this information might give her.

Old Dad went with them as far as St. Simons, and there remained with the army. Their next stop was at the Darien the Scotch settlement. Diana had come some miles out of her direct way to see one of the Highlanders who, it had been said, knew something of Robert's fate. It was the barest shadow of a possibility, and so she held it, yet would not disregard it entirely.

She had not known that here at Darien there was a camp made by certain of the Carolina forces who, coming down too late for action, had chosen to return leisurely overland. But so it was; and they were but fairly landed at the place when Lit, who had been for some moments questioning one of the rowers in Creek, turned to Diana and said, with some embarrassment.

"Mistress, the captain with these Carolina troops was down three years ago. He — he was in the attack upon Augustine, and I do think it likely he might have been at Moosa, though I know not that for sure. Will ye — will ye go over and speak with him?"

Diana was on her feet in an instant. "Surely," she said. "Why, Lit, you could never believe that I would hesitate to meet any one because he came from Charles Town, and may have — have — known me formerly, when the quest is such as mine is."

"Aye," faltered Lit, "but 'tis — well, to be short about it, 'tis Captain Tillsford in command here. Shall we go or not? I will go alone, my dear; but likely he'll tell me nothing, just for spite."

Diana's face had crimsoned at the name; but she gathered up her courage and resolution. This, she

said to herself, was one of the things which she must face, for the sake of her own womanhood as Robert's wife. There must be no creature on earth whose front she feared, before whom she was shamed.

Matthew Zubley went to seek for the Highland-man they had come to see, and also to secure a lodging. Lit's Indian informant having directed them, they sent him ahead, and came close after, Diana leading, Lit following her with Return in her arms. Diana's name being sent ahead, Tillsford was prepared. He placed a camp-chair for her (Lit had discreetly remained outside) and himself stood.

"Pardon me, Mistress —" He halted for the name as though he had forgotten.

"Mistress Robert Marshall," Diana's full, grave tones supplied.

"Oh! I was mixing it, y' see," he taunted her, "with — with — er — Cameron."

"He hath mixed his liquors," Lit muttered, "or he would never play the hound so — no, not even he. 'Tis well I staid here," tears of fury in her eyes; "for I should 'a' spoiled all with my tongue."

"Which is it, now," the captain went on, with an assumption of patience, "that you seek? A certain Robert Marshall?"

"My husband, sir, and this child's father," Diana explained, quietly, "who was lost at Fort Moosa in the first attack on Augustine, now nearly three years ago. And, sir, if you will permit me, I knew you of old, and it was not for nothing that I dreaded coming to you on such a quest, expecting nothing less than you seem apt to give me. But bethink you a minute. Have you any grievance against that foolish, ill-taught girl, Diana Chaters?"

"Why, yes," returned Tillsford with sudden bitterness, "I think I had. She was a person who served her betters (myself among them) as Archibald Cameron afterward used her; and I am very certain, madam, you cannot deny great bitterness toward that gentleman."

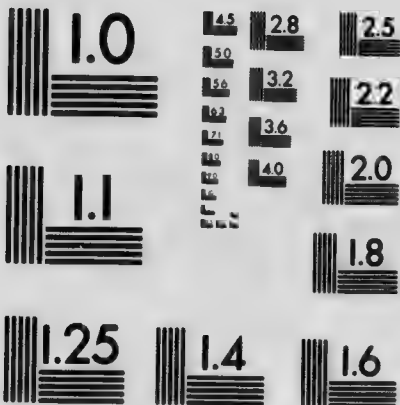
"Sir," Diana answered him, "I am not here to make defence to you. Not to you am I answerable. And yet, I will say, that I have no bitterness toward Archibald Cameron, nor yourself, nor any man. And as for what you should feel toward me: I did you no harm. I have not served you as ill when I refused your hand—even when in my shallow folly I paraded that rejection—as you have done by that poor, pale woman you left behind you in Charles Town, and who was, when you married her, rosy, laughing Monis Fanshawe."

Tillsford shrugged and frowned. "It appears," he said, "that if a woman hath not the fiend's own temper to give her spirit, she must whine. I am to understand that Mistress Tillsford has been meeting of you in Savannah and relating her woes?"

"Nay," returned Diana, "when I heard she was in Savannah, I did go to see her at the inn. It was a sweet girl, and gay and happy as a child, when that you wedded her. And now she hangs her head like one shamed. She sits at home pale and pining, when those that were her mates are merry-making."

"Why, for that," Tillsford retorted, "she must make her choice. Like yourself, she cannot remain, as a woman should, in her own place, but must be coming down to Savannah after me. If you will know, madam," he burst out suddenly after a





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(ANSI and ISO TEST CHART No. 2)

brooding pause, "I did meet this husband of yours. I met him scarce more than a week before the attack of Fort Moosa, and despite all that had come and gone, I liked him well. He was a brave soldier, a man courteous and winning. I saw him at Charles Town at the supper-table where the affront was given for which he sliced Percy Arden's cheek. And I give you my word, I have hated women for it ever since. He sat down at that board a blithe, care-free lad; he rose from it a man, ruthlessly disillusioned, wounded, shamed, embittered. And when I saw him again — and ever after, they say — he was silent and grim, and wore the face of one who had looked on some horrible Indian torture, and could never win back to the brightness and goodliness of life, from knowledge of such agonies."

Diana met this fierce arraignment without flinching. It was not to him, not to this man, she owed an acknowledgment or confession of what she felt. "Have you information of my husband's present whereabouts?" she said, rising. "If not, believe me, sir, I would better go."

"Nay, Mistress Marshall, I have not said that I know nothing of your husband. I take it, madam, that when I speak to you I address a deserted wife?"

"Would that affect the information you might have to give me, sir?" inquired Diana unfalteringly.

"Why, yes, I think it would," Tillsford replied, over his shoulder, as he stood half-turning away from her, gnawing at the end of a pen held in his fingers, "I think, madam, it would. If your husband, a fine lad — a gentleman — a man who has my most heartfelt sympathy — hath had enough of

your fiend's temper and cruel, insolent nature — by your leave, madam, I speak plainly, as is necessary —”

“As is necessary,” assented Diana. “I perceive, sir, that it will indeed be necessary for me to hear these things from you, as a sort of toll, before you are willing to give me what I seek.”

“Well, then,” resumed Tillsford, unmoved, “if he, having the heart of a man, left you, and would have none of you, nor hear from you, and now seeks to be quit of you, while you come traipsing after him who has had such a heart-scald of you, to beg pardon and favour because you have a child, and, lacking him, must live a shamed, forsaken, and deserted wife — if all these things be true, madam, and he desires to remain hid from you, I should do ill to tell you what I know of him.”

The blood had left her face during this tirade, so that she stood for an instant after he was silent, white to the very lips, and trembling. But only for an instant. That brave heart of hers met its routed forces in full retreat, rallied, marshalled, and beat them fiercely back to the field of her cheeks. Troop after troop, reserve upon reserve, it flung them furiously there, till that field blazed with their sanguine banners.

Tillsford lifted his eyes and barely glanced at the fine face glowing with generous indignation, the sparkling eyes, arched lips, and trembling nostrils. Then, with a covert smile, he dropped his gaze once more to his boot toe, and stood waiting for the outburst. He had touched her at last. He was well acquainted with the Diana of old, the beautiful virago, and eager to hear her justify his ill report.

It came upon him with a shock when her voice began gently, and on a low note that thrilled along his nerves like pain.

"Captain Tillsford, I have accepted grief and shame at God's hands, and reproof from those worthy to reprove. But you are not such, and from you I do not accept it. I hear your taunts; but I take them to me not at all, nor do I cringe to them. You do not say these things to me because I deserve them, but because you desire to say them. You have said and done as ill, to one who offended you not at all; who loved you; whom you married for spite. She would not see me as others see their visitors, but sent for me to talk with her in her chamber there in Savannah, supposing that you would have sought me at my house, and she might have word of you. She made me sit beside her, and looked upon me so pitifully that I could have wept. And when I told her I was setting forth to seek my husband, who had been lost since the first battle before Augustine, she said, 'You, too, Diana? Even you? Ah, men are cruel. Why, Diana, my husband was in Charles Town not three months gone, and came not even out to our plantation-house. Oh, can I have grown so ugly, that once was called fair? He lay with his friends at the tavern, and all in Charles Town knew of it, that I was not only deserted, but flouted, scorned, who had never offered him anything but love.'

"I sought to tell her that you must have loved her when you wedded her, and would do so again. But she said, what perchance you had said to her, that 'twas for my sake — for love of me, and spite at my denials — that you married her; that she

knew it now. Then she wept with me, and said that even my beauty had not held my husband with me, and," the red rose once more, deeply and painfully, in Diana's face. "and cried, most pitifully, that her babe would be as fatherless as this my son, for that she believed you would never come back to her."

Tillsford turned with a start. "I —" he began, then halted in confusion.

"Have you been reading her letters? Do you not know why she follows you, sir?" Diana inquired with sudden sternness. "No, do not tell me," as his lips parted to speak. "I have no right to know. I have tried with you and failed; I did it for my love's sake; but I will humiliate Robert Marshall's wife no further. You will give me no help. Come, my son, let us be going."

"A moment, pray," Tillsford stopped her as she came to the tent door. "I — After all, my information is not recent. It was before the disaster at Fort Moosa that I saw your husband last. I have had word, which seemed to me direct, that he was confined in the castle of Augustine. I believe that young Ulrich Zahn, who went home wounded to Ebenezer, will be able to tell you something. He knows, at least, that Lieutenant Marshall was living six days after Moosa fell; and if I might, there is a man in Carolina who may know more, to whom I will apply."

Diana turned and slightly curtsied to him, the child in her arms, his fair, dimpled, blue-eyed face, with its ravel of golden hair about it — Robert Marshall's face in dewy miniature — lying upon her shoulder.

"Return!" she said, "thank the kind gentleman. He has helped us to find your father."

"Return!" echoed Tillsford, with a curious inflection. "My God! Diana, who would not return to such a wife, and such a son? Nay, be not offended," as she drew back coldly at the heat of the speech. "'Twas meant in all purity and kindness. More, Diana. I give you my word, I dally here no longer, but go now as fast as Heaven permits me to Mistress Tillsford, to be with her in her time of need, and patch a sorry business there as best I may. I—I thank you for what you have told me of my wife."

At the tent entrance Lit met Diana and silently took the child in her own arms.

"So, Lit," said Diana to her, "here is a ray of light in all this darkness. I have helped poor Monis Fanshawe. God must be forgiving me, if he lets me succeed in doing good to others."

"Aye," returned Lit, with a most ludicrous and grudging reluctance, "I suppose 'twould even be better than as if I'd won the chance to wring his ill-speaking neck for him, though I've so longed and prayed to be let to do it."

Matthew Zubley had learned that the Highlander, of whom Diana had come to make inquiries, knew absolutely nothing of Robert, after the moment (which had already been described to her by two witnesses thereto) when, fully dressed and armed, he had been seen struggling with a tall Indian who had clubbed his musket to strike. Zubley had also found out the humble but clean and most welcome little guests' house. His comfortable, reassuring face met the women as they came from Captain

Tillsford's tent, and he conveyed them to their home for the night, walking ahead carrying the child, Lit and Diana trailing somewhat tardily after.

As they were about entering the little place, Diana, who came last, heard a quick step behind her, and a young fellow, Cecil Strangeways, now a lieutenant in one of Captain Tillsford's companies, overtook and spoke to her. It had been long since she saw Cecil. She flushed at sight of him now. She felt that she had used this boy worse than another, because they were childish playmates, and when he, a year her junior, discovered a youthful passion for her, she had made it the sport and jest of all their circle.

"Diana!" he cried, "Mistress Marshall! Was — was Captain Tillsford respectful, as he should have been? As I came up to the tent, I — it seemed to me I heard his voice raised in a tone —"

"Why, Cecil, my dear boy!" cried Diana, putting out both her hands, "I had no thought to find you here. And are you now become a soldier? 'Tis my husband's profession, and that which my son will follow, no doubt. Lit, dear, is the boy asleep? O, well, Cecil, at least you can look at him. And as he is no great conversationalist at this age, perchance merely looking will serve as well, for a bachelor like yourself."

"But, Diana," urged the lieutenant, as Lit carried the sleeping baby inside, "I would know if there is aught I can do to serve you. They tell me you are seeking Lieutenant Marshall."

"You, to serve me!" echoed Diana, the quick tears in her eyes. "Methinks you have a most forgiving nature, Cecil. Yet you were happy. God was

good to you that in the old days of my poor, shallow, blind folly, I was moved only to slight and scorn your suit, who were my better at every point. You are fortunate in that, though then you knew it not."

"Nor do I know it now," he interrupted, looking steadily at her, "nor ever can learn it, I think, Diana. To me you will always be more than other women —"

"Whether better or worse?" she interrupted, smiling gently. "Well, in those days, I think, Cecil, I was more insolent and greedy of admiration than another, and you were well avenged. I had laid up wrath against a time of wrath; I had been eager to show my disdain of love and loving hearts. I never made a friend of a lover — unless you remain my friend. Blind that I was, if any heart were weak enough to show love for me, it was my joy to tear out that love, and, in its stead, plant hate and rage. O," as he would have spoken, "I planted seeds of these; and if they failed to spring up and bear fruit in you, 'twas not my fault. I used to think afterward how glad must be those I had scorned and wounded, when they saw me scorned and wounded in my turn."

"I, glad? Could you think so? Never."

"Why, I had misprized your great heart always; trifled with and insulted your rich gifts which you would have offered unworthy me; and when my shame came upon me, when the cup of gall which I had gibingly poured out to you — and you had drank in noble silence, not denying its bitterness nor trying to thwart my base triumph, neither reproaching me, nor seeking any revenge — when that same cup was held to my shrieking lips by a

hand of steel, when my heart was ground to powder by a heart so much harder than my own — ”

“ Why, then it was, Diana, that my heart bled. I thought when you did cast me off, that I knew sorrow; but when I heard of your — of your — of that dastard Cameron’s deed, and I away on my ship and could not come to you, to bring you my sword, when I heard that, Diana, then I learned what a man — know of helpless anguish.”

“ And so, — aid, deeply touched, and striving to give t — somewhat lighter tone, “ you are fain to — consult your superior officer on my behalf. Know, then, that Captain Tillsford professed me no more than my just deserts, in some ways; and in all ways our score is even. And indeed, Cecil, at the last he did show a man’s heart, and I — I much respect him.”

“ Always generous,” said young Strangeways, smiling. Then, “ Mistress Marshall, did — did your husband ever mention the meeting of me in Charles Town two years ago?”

“ Why, no, Cecil,” she replied, the red tingeing her cheeks as she spoke. “ He was ordered south almost immediately, and I saw him but once after his return from Charles Town.”

“ Was the hand yet healed?” he pursued; and Diana cried, with sudden intuition:

“ You were his second in that duel! Was it not so? And it was fought because — ”

“ Because a lying fellow had taken too much wine,” Strangeways interrupted, “ and your husband liked not the way in which he carried himself thereafter.” But now Diana was fully informed what tool it was that had wounded Robert’s hand.

The next morning at daylight the party was well on its way to Savannah, in the big, staunch periagua Diana had bought of old Dad Buckaloo. Arrived there, Sir Paris was found to be well, contented, and his arrangements, as might have been supposed, all of the best.

Ebenezer was much further from Savannah by water than by land, so did the river wind. Yet Diana chose the water way, for her boat was comfortable and convenient. Also, she desired to take Return with her, and travelling horseback, carrying a baby in July weather, was not a thing to be lightly undertaken.

The prim, clean little German town, laid out, as Savannah had been, with straight, broad streets, large lots, and many open squares, was upon the west bank of the Savannah, and overlooked a lake called Niedlinger's Sea. The inhabitants, German Lutherans, practising the religion of Christ in its purity, were of humble origin and primitive habits, accustomed to labour and patient of toil. They desired no slaves, and therefore there was a quaint homeliness about this village, unknown in those settlements where the houses of the wealthy elbowed the palmetto huts of the poor.

Return was vastly taken with the gay, old-fashioned flowers, bonny-dame, lad's-love, youth and old age, rioting from the door-stones to the split palings of each dooryard; and long after they had left the spot, he prattled of the flowers in "'Nezer town."

The clue proved, as so many other clues had proven, quite vain. The boy, Ulrich Zahn, who might have told them something, sickened on his

way up from the coast, and, his wounds opening once more, he died a week before their arrival.

The disappointment was severer than Diana could have been brought to confess. Indeed, it was for the moment paralysing. Hardly knowing which way to turn her eyes or her steps, half-consciously glad to pause here in this air of simplicity, this atmosphere of intense, inspired religious devotion, to rest and heal their hearts from the shocks of battle, the grief of cruel bereavement, and the blows of repeated disappointment, the little group tarried among these gentle folk. Zubley, who spoke their language, was soon enlisted in Ebenezer labours, interests, and undertakings, lending sage counsel and a ready arm.

From here Diana made three several short journeys, to as many different places, to search for persons who were said to possess positive knowledge of a man answering to Robert's description. Each time, when the information was brought to her, it seemed most genuine, and to betoken the fortunate conclusion of her quest. Each time, when she had followed up the clue, she found nothing, and brought back to faithful Zubley and Lit and the thriving, prattling baby at "'Nezer town," a brave face above a bleeding heart.

There seemed a whole fraternity of rumours afloat, probably children of some equally insubstantial parent, pointing to the presence in some Indian tribe of a white man who had fallen into his captors' hands during the Augustine expedition of 1739-40.

After following up the third one of these to the point where it vanished before the eyes of her

cheated hope, she determined to take her little train back to Savannah, and to ask of General Oglethorpe an escort to Augustine, and letters to the commandante.

And while she nervelessly delayed a little to put the resolution into immediate effect, chance tossed into her lap the very information which she sought—or rather, sold it to her at an extortionate price.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE THEFT OF THE MAN-CHILD

"O BUCK an' boun, my merry men a',
Who's last s'all ne'er get good o' me.
They ha' stown awa' my little fair son —
An' twa braw touns gaes to that one
Who's fand and bring him back to me.'

THROUGHOUT all these journeyings, Return had been taught (with many and solemn admonitions, supported and rendered effective by illustrative narratives) that he must never stray away from the party; never go beyond the sight of his mother, Lit, or Matthew Zubley, even with Chunkey.

But here in the village their vigilance somewhat relaxed, and one evening, as the two women sat together sewing upon their travel-worn garments and his own small coats, Chunkey being at reluctant labour in the kitchen, the little bobbing yellow head and babbling tongue shifting and fluttering among the flowers just outside the window, Lit (whose mental state was probably somewhat the more normal, her mood less strenuous and intensely pre-occupied) suddenly remembered that she had missed both sight and sound of the boy for several moments past, rose quietly, and went to the door.

There, she neither saw nor heard him. She said

no word to his mother, but catching up a man's hat which lay upon the floor near by, ran out, with a curious sinking at her heart, to search for the child.

Half an hour later, she came back, white-lipped, dry-eyed, frantic; having been through every highway and byway, and in every house in the village, and met not one person who had seen the child, nor found trace of him anywhere.

A searching party was immediately organised. Not far to the east, there was the Savannah; south of the village flowed Little Creek; and in the same direction also was the lake — Niedlinger's Sea — into any of which the child might have fallen if his little legs could have carried him so far so quickly. The Indians were always staunch friends of these Salzburgers; but there was the danger from prowling wild beasts.

The gentle, affectionate Salzburgers were out all that night with lanterns and horns, seeking for the lost child. Morning found no trace. Of Diana's condition, of her consternation of soul, it would be idle to attempt to speak. She had gone with the men as far as her strength permitted, and was now sitting at home in the little cottage. From that figure of despair so terrible, Lit's soft heart recoiled, — the heart which had gone out to this patrician young beauty from the hour when she found her, bayed and frantic, in the church at Charles Town, and which was yet aching with its own bruises, bleeding with its own wounds.

The kind Salzburgers were doing everything that could be done; and the poor girl had crept away to rest a little, with dry, wide-open eyes and aching limbs, leaving the mother sitting as she had sat all

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"CLUTCHED HIM TO HER WITH NO SOUND
BUT A DRY, STRANGLED SOB."



day, in a maze of misery, too wearied with her last night's searching to put one foot before the other, when a child came in and told Diana that an Indian man and woman wished to see her.

She rose, a tragic figure, and went out to where the pair stood under the tall live-oaks before the cottage. The woman was young and fresh, and would have been almost beautiful but for the fact that her face was so marred by weeping, and her eyes so swollen from it that she looked like one in a fever. The man, a tall, fine-looking brave, greeted Diana with that peculiar sweeping gesture of the hand which is like the downward flight of a bird. Then both brown palms were spread abroad toward the earth with a gesture of renunciation, and he pushed forward to her a little figure in a single small buckskin garment, wearing some bluejay's feathers stuck through a fillet of buckskin on his head, and hugging a gaily painted bow with arrows.

"Muvver," cried Return, "see what me b'inged you."

Diana darted upon the returned wanderer, clutched him to her with no sound but a dry, strangled sob. She held him so for a long moment, in which she seemed to gather back her spirit; and the docile, subjective little creature was very quiet. Then she kissed him, lips, cheeks, hair, and eyes; and her face began to live again. When she had looked him over jealously, he mildly squirming meanwhile to get away from her close embrace, she turned with eager, passionate gratitude to the Indians. "Where did you find the child?" she breathed.

The woman, who evidently understood no Eng-

lish, shook her head; the man answered brokenly, "We bring back. Little brave — we no keep. We bring back." Again the gesture of voluntary renunciation.

"Muvver," cried Return, "I rided on a horse, an' I rided on anuvver horse. See my foots, muvver," and he held up a tiny moccasin for her to admire.

Something strange in the attitude of the two reminded Diana to call Lit from the house to act as interpreter; and it was wonderful as it was beautiful to watch the difference of expression of these two natures — with such strong likenesses and unlikenesses — at such an illuminating moment.

Poor Lit, who had been tearless and silent, broke down, sobbed aloud, smiled through her tears; and, ere they were well dry, began with characteristic directness to investigate matters. Having talked rapidly first with the man and then with the woman for some moments, she turned to Diana and said:

"They hope you won't be hard on them, because they have brought the little brave back, and they wanted most dismally bad to keep him."

"Hard on them! I?" cried Diana. "Why, I wish to reward them."

"Aye, mistress," agreed Lit, "I could keep it from you, and I think they would have been wise to do so, because the mischief is not done, and there is no need for them to tell on themselves; but —" she looked at the dark faces watching her so dumbly and eagerly, then at Diana; then went on gently:

"It seems this man here stole the child. Do you mind now when he came in and asked us for a bit of bread, that he might play he was going of a journey? He prattled much of it then. I believe

he told us all; but we gave no heed to his baby's talk, save to bring him the food; and he went out with it. 'Twas then the man took him. This woman, his wife, had a son, who is dead; so he says that she grieves all the time, and the Great Spirit sent her no more sons. And when he saw Return and remembered how much his wife wept, he thought he would take the child to her, and that she would weep no more."

Diana looked at the man with a sort of horror. Lit's great, soft eyes were upon her face. "Aye, mistress," she said quickly, "but don't be too hard on them. 'Tis just as I said, they had no need to tell you, and they might have kept the child. But see, they have brought him back. *He* was blithe and willing — like a man as he is," and she shook her head at the boy. "There was no trouble on his part. But the woman says that when he slept upon her breast, and she was so happy, she could but think of another woman, who was his mother, and whose breast was empty that night, and how bad she must be feeling. So then, she tells her man that bring him home they must. And he made ready and brought them, carrying our little man nearly all the distance, which is near thirty miles, as I judge."

The Indians stood silent, though nowise sullen. The man, a noble physical specimen, remained a little apart, motionless, with folded arms, yet with eyes that were observant, even apprehensive. Again Lit looked earnestly at them, and then continued:

"The woman says she knows now that she did very wrong to weep so for her dead son, when she has so good a man; for that he never uttered word

of reproach when she told him they must fetch back the gift he had brought her with such risk and labour, but came at once, knowing that he was like to be greatly punished. Poor thing, she says she will go home and weep no more, and strive to comfort him."

With one of her sweet, good-natured smiles at the warrior, she broke out almost gaily to Diana: "Good Lord! and well may! For he is sure a gentlemen. I know of none among the other breed that wouldn't have been roaring, 'Mark this woman! She will and she will not — and knows not what she wants. Pah — A woman! You blubbered for a brat, and I brought you one — and far finer than that you had —'" and Lit's eyes shone with mirth; even Diana smiled a little. "'Now you blubber to have him back again. Well, madam, you may go lug him back yourself; and be hanged, by the white people, for your pains —'"

By this time Lit was laughing unrestrainably; and Diana, watching the child with his painted bow and gaily feathered arrows, smiled indulgently. Probably taking heart from this, the Indian woman touched Lit's arm and put forward a bundle. It was the clothes Return had had on when the Indian took him. She laid in Lit's hand another tiny pair of moccasins, too, and pointing to where the nascent warrior frolicked about, clad only in the other pair and his single little garment, scarce more than a loin-cloth, lifted her swollen eyes to the faces before her, and talked for some moments in soft, guttural yet musical, Creek.

"She wrought him these here clothes," said Lit, translating, "which she says are a sight better than

the kind you give him. She prays that you will let him wear them, for that the moccasins will not make such noise when he moves about, as do the ugly stiff ones of the white people. She hopes he may be swift and light-footed and limber — a hunter — a warrior — one whose enemy cannot hear his loud, heavy step coming, nor follow him well, but who can himself steal up on an enemy and kill him, or the deer. I think by the looks of her that she hath done nothing but weep since she decided to bring the child back; and by your leave, mistress, it seems to me that this red savage, with the gentleman to husband, has done more than many a civilised woman would have done in her place."

The Indian woman now came and knelt before Diana, and laid down the little bundle. There were the extra moccasins, which must have belonged to her dead child, and another little garment of buckskin also, and some strange painted toys.

Diana looked down at the pitiful offering, and a great lump came in her throat. "Poor soul," she said, "poor sister woman! I suppose a mother's heart is the same, whether the skin above it be red or white; and I forgive you freely." Her eyes were full of tears as she said it.

The Indian woman stood up. Putting her hand on the little boy's head, she looked wistfully at the yellow curls which rose about her brown fingers.

"I reckon she'd like to have one of them," Lit prompted.

"Surely!" cried Diana, and drawing her scissors from her girdle pocket, she cut off a shining ringlet, and folding it in her own handkerchief, gave it to the squaw.

The two made their adieus in solemn Indian fashion (the woman coming back once to embrace little Return, pressing his dimpled hands and even his feet, to her cheeks and her breast), then walked down toward the gate, she ahead, the warrior following slowly, a reversal of the usual Indian manner which made Lit look after them curiously. The woman stepped through the gate, the man followed. Outside it, he remained a moment motionless, his back to them, then wheeled, came part way up the walk, stopped, and standing erect beckoned Lit to him with a glance.

She came wonderingly. When she had approached near enough, he said in a very low voice, "The white squaw hath been kind to me — and mine. When the hand might with justice have chastised, it hath been stretched forth in friendliness — yea, even to caress. There is a white man held captive among the Indians in the mountains above Coweta town."

"Nay," returned Lit, growing very white and coming closer. "The Indians keep no captives; they take no prisoners."

"You do not understand me," corrected the brave. "He is not captive among those Indians that be with the Spaniards, but among some of our own people. I must say no more." And turning he strode after his wife.

Diana had taken her newly recovered treasure and gone inside the house. There, with Chunkey and many of their Salzburger neighbours gathered around her, Lit could hear her laughing and talking and cooing to the boy in that set of tones and words which only a mother knows. The girl thought upon

the many weary and fruitless journeys which this same poor mother had made with her child in her arms, seeking one whom she seemed destined never to find; and she asked herself whether it would be right to give her this piece of very uncertain information which might send her forth upon travels more dangerous than any she had yet undertaken.

As she reflected upon the matter, her hand went instinctively to her bosom, and drew out the letter which Bennerworth had written to her, and which she, poor soul, carried about as one might carry a relic of a saint, though unable to apprehend it.

With the touch, came a new light upon the matter in hand. Suppose *he* were lost, possibly among the Indians, possibly in the bowels of a filthy Spanish prison-ship; could she know any rest or happiness elsewhere than in the search for him?

Lit went in and acquainted Diana with the news which she had received, down to its minutest details, adding that she believed she herself could guess in which tribe Robert might be found. And the next day the little party set out for the south.

CHAPTER XIV.

SEEKERS AFTER THE WHITE MAN

"Up then spak the nut-brown bride,
She spak wi' meikle spite;
'And whair gat ye that rose-water
That does mak yee sae white?'"

DIANA'S little caravan was drawn up in a pitiful small group, dead weary, in the shadow of the hills two hundred miles and more inland from Fort Augusta.

Here the ridges rose, like the rim of a cup, around an almost circular basin. At one side of this bowl a great peak reared itself above its fellows, as Lit said, like the handle of a piggin, and called the valley beneath, the piggin itself. Below them were grouped the huts and lodges of an Indian town.

"I judge, if we have followed directions as we should," Matthew Zubley said, "this is the head town of Alata at last."

The caravan consisted of saddle-horses ridden by Diana, Lit, Chunkey, Zubley, and three Creek warriors of proven character, with several pack-horses, bearing carefully considered and selected burdens. For all Oglethorpe's knowledge and experience had been brought by his kind heart to help in the preparing for this expedition from which so much was

hoped. And, as they came principally over the trail he had followed in making that wonderful and historic journey into the wilderness to meet the assembled chiefs at Coweta town, he could warn, counsel, and foresee much. There was a good boat, too, rowed by four picked Creek rowers, back on the waters of a small tributary of the Ocmulgee.

Now, as they stood looking down on what they believed to be Alata's village, athwart the top of that tall mountain peak over against them, the dying sun struck a ray like a pointing finger. This shining finger-tip emblazoned, for one long moment, upon the mountain's shield of soft obscurity, the tiny figures of a moving party, like themselves, which crossed that way and went upward toward the country of the Cherokees.

It was, in point of fact, had they known it, an embassy to the Back Enemy — the Six Nations — carrying proposals of peace. The white man whom the little group had come to seek, clad in beautiful soft buckskin, with richly wrought moccasins on his feet and a splendid ambassador's head-dress upon his fair head, halted his own party, which was a strong one of Alata's picked warriors, and looked back as that luminous finger descended upon them. They were setting forth to gain what advantage they might by travelling in the cool of the evening, and later, by the light of the moon.

The white man sighed impatiently, shook his bridle-rein, and moved on. Diana's party, now in motion once more, going down to the queen's town, was but a moving speck to him, as his caravan had been to her, and it held his sad eyes but a moment.

Half-way down the slope Alata herself, with sev-

eral of her head men, met Diana and her companions. Alata's gaze found it hard to leave little Return, who rode on Zubley's saddle-bow (a cause of offence, rankling in Chunkey's strange, dog-like mind), and it was much the same with the grave, keen-eyed old men who accompanied her. Lit acted as interpreter, and immediately told the queen their errand.

"Yea," Alata answered her, "there was a white man here. Come you, and rest in my town. Be at peace in the lodges of Alata's people. The white man is gone upon an embassy. Abide with me till he returns, and find if he be that one whom you seek."

This, being translated to Diana, brought a glow of hope to her face, and a pitiful eagerness to her manner. "O, ask her, ask her, Lit, at once," she cried, and there was the catch of a sob in her voice, "what like was this man."

The queen, who held an impassive face, yet watched the women narrowly, answered with seeming candour, that the man who had been with them was no longer young, — a dark man, so dark as to look almost of their colour; that he chose to remain among the Indians, and to teach them the arts and industries of the white men.

Then, for the first time in her quest, Diana's strong heart gave way, and covering her face with her hands, she begged the queen to let her go to that lodge which had been set apart for her, the visitor's lodge, sacred to hospitality in every Indian village.

There she wept on Lit's bosom. "O, my poor girl," she said, "I fear that I do wrong to draw you with me upon this weary quest. Sometimes I feel

that I am a crazed thing, that none other but myself would believe Robert still living. How is it? Have you yet one grain of faith?" and she drew back, her hand upon the other's shoulder, and interrogated the frank face before her.

"Why, so far as this Alata here is concerned," Lit made characteristic answer, "I think nothing of her. Lieutenant Marshall might be here, for all I know, hidden in one of the lodges; and — and in any case, mistress, we will never give up till we know of his death. Is it not so? I will find out what I may, and bring you word, for truly — truly, my poor dear — the queen's talk means naught to me."

But Lit, and her Creek friends who made up the caravan, had no better success. To their questions they got no answer at all, save from those who had heard Alata describe the white man; and these only repeated and affirmed that description.

What Diana missed, or lost, at this point through the fact of Chunkey being — from that fancied slight to her office as Return's bearer — in one of her sullen fits, is a thing which can never be known. Much possibly; possibly not anything. At any rate, it seemed now that nothing was to be gained by delay. And so, later in the evening, when the queen had a great feast made in their honour, and they were brought into the public square, where all the social affairs of an Indian village are transacted, Diana thanked Alata with florid courtesy (as she had been schooled) for her much kindness and hospitality, and told her in the same elaborate manner that they intended to remain but one night her guests, and would set forth at sunrise the following morning to retrace their steps.

Lit, who watched carefully while she translated this speech to the queen, fancied she could detect, beneath the stately protests and offers of hospitality that sought to cover it, the satisfaction with which the announcement was received by Alata.

Next day there was a giving and accepting of gifts, a formal making of adieus. Alata herself accompanied her guests for near a day's journey upon their way, leaving them with farewells that were affectionate despite their extreme dignity.

And when she was come once more to her own town, and had been there two days, another party crossed the rim of its hills where Diana's little company had crossed, though arriving by a different trail. This was headed by Toonahowi, coming up from the wars below with his victorious legions rich with Oglethorpe's presents, and proud of the general's marks of trust and gratitude.

The young chief was welcomed in the same stately fashion in which Diana had been received — an Indian does not ask the business of a guest — yet, being himself the ruler of a Creek tribe, there were ceremonials observed which were not necessary in the case of the women. One of these was a pow-wow, a word most expressive in those days, but too hardly used in ours to suggest the grave and serious nature of the ceremony it designated. It was after a dance which had been given in his honour that the musicians, and even the head men, retired to a distance, and left the two seated upon the ground beneath the great live-oak in the centre of the public square.

They sat confronting each other in silence for a long time. Had Alata been a chief instead of a

chieftainess, they would both have been smoking. As it was, Toonahowi alone held the long-stemmed pipe, they both looked upon the ground and made no sign, while the Indians gathered at a distance left them, respectful of their mute communing.

Toonahowi broke the silence. "There is a white man captive in your tribe," he said, gravely.

After a mute interval Alata returned, "There is no white man captive with my people. He remains with us because he chooses to remain."

Though she was an Indian, she was also a woman; and when the reply to this reply of hers was so very long coming, she stole a look at her guest, but found his face impassive and his eyes fixed quietly upon the curling smoke from his pipe.

At the end of what seemed even to her too long a silence, he said again, with no added emphasis and no weakening in the force of his assertion, "There is a white man captive in your tribe."

"Let my brother say what he will; he is my guest," she returned, with a sweeping upward gesture of her palm.

Toonahowi gathered from this speech that he might proceed with the delicate mission which had brought him to this council. "The white man," he explained, "is beloved by our general. He has a wife and a home among his own people. Now, we live with the white men as though they were our brothers; and they give to us cunning weapons and garments and food, as though they were our brothers indeed. But this thing which thou hast done, O Alata, is of the things which make war between brothers. I pray you let this white man depart with me."

"I have said," Alata began wearily, "that he remains of his own wish."

"Then," interrupted Toonahowi swiftly, "let him go of his own wish; for if I may see him and tell him what is in my heart to say, he will surely go with me."

Alata showed by just the faintest widening of the nostrils of her thin, sensitive nose, that she felt the battle was now on; but the soft gravity of her demeanour did not relax. "I have kept the white man," she said, "not against his will, nor against my own, but willingly on both parts, because he knows many things which my people ought to know, and he will stay and teach them."

She fell silent, and again Toonahowi smoked impassively; and once more the two sat with their eyes upon the ground. The waiting Indians settled themselves more comfortably, and decided that the pow-wow was to be a long one.

"I have heard, O my sister," Toonahowi said, "that you desire this white man to wed with you and remain as chief of your tribe. Is this thing true?"

The red welled up under Alata's brown skin; and now, when she should have looked upon her interlocutor, her eyes sought the ground. She replied to him in a brave voice, yet a voice diminished of its late volume. "It would be well for my people — it would be well for my tribe — if I could do this thing. With such a man to instruct us in seasons of peace, and such a chief to lead us in war, we should become even as the white men are, a very great people."

For the first time Toonahowi looked full upon her, and there was a smile of pity in his eyes. "My

sister," he said, "I went with these white men across the great water to the east. I went to their head town, which is called London. I saw there their head man, who is king of all their chiefs, and ruler of them all. And I saw those about him, very great men. I saw their ships, their houses, and their many contrivances for which, in our language, I cannot even find words so that I may tell you of them.

"And one thing I saw which I may never forget. I saw that the white man and the Indian, though they call each other brothers, can never be brothers. My heart is warm to the man Oglethorpe; I love him as though he had been my father's son, born of one mother with me; and yet he will go back to his own people, and it will be to him as though Toonahowi had been a dog or a horse whom he had owned and loved for a time in this country which is ours, and which will soon be theirs. And he will die and go to his God, who is strong and shall prevail; not like the god of the Indian, powerless and resourceless — save to —"

"These are strange words," interrupted the queen; "this is bad counsel, my brother. If the white men are indeed evil men, and would take the land from us, why do we not band together and drive them into the sea?"

"What is all this talk," responded Toonahowi severely, "of evil and good? I said nothing of it. I said only that the white men were not as the Indians, and could never be brothers to them. It is true; and I will say to you further, my sister, that they can never rightly be husbands and wives.

"Once, my friend Oglethorpe tells me, it was

done, when a princess, daughter of a most powerful emperor of Indian tribes to the east of the country of the Back Enemy, and herself greatly loved by the white people, was married to one of their men. They made much of her — there was love between her and them — and they took her to England. And in a little, O Alata Anawaqua, she died. It was pity, he said. Not any of the people knew what killed the one poor Indian princess, alone in that great, terrible, strange, wise England of theirs. But Toonahowi knew. Her soul failed her. It could not hold its life. It could not — I have not words to say it in Creek — it could not breast that sea of the white soul — her little untaught Indian spirit, her angel. They say it loved her — that great, wise, strong, terrible white soul — yet well I know it killed her; and she died like a tender wood-flower uprooted in a burning sun."

Alata sat motionless, looking upon the ground, and spoke no word. After a pause, Toonahowi's soft, grave voice took up the theme again.

"Their poor men may take squaws from among us to work for them, but their head men will not take Indian wives; and an Indian, though he were cacique of all the Creeks — though he were emperor of the great confederate nations — might not hope to wed a white chief's daughter."

Something in the tone struck upon the woman's ear, made sensitive by her own heart. "Thou, too, brother?" she inquired, softly, not stirring a finger, but only turning her eyes upon him.

"Even I," returned Toonahowi, drooping his mournful gaze, and fixing it upon the broad gold ring on his slender brown hand.

"Tell me," uttered the queen, very low.

"I had not thought to tell it while I lived," he replied to her. "And yet, I tell this thing to you for good, and not for evil. Listen, O my sister: She was the daughter of a very great chief, a man whom the king loved as a brother; and when, with my uncle Toma-chi-chi and ten other Creeks, I went to the land of the white men, of all their fair women whom we looked upon, none was like to her. Her face was so shining that it was to me like the sun at noonday, and I could scarce look upon it for its brightness. Yellow, like the maize when it is ripe, was her hair."

The queen shivered a little, and her hand involuntarily sought her breast, where lay a curl of such hair, which had been cut from the white man's head when he tossed in delirium.

"And yet it was not her beauty that melted the heart of Toonahowi, and made it water in his breast. It was that the Great Spirit, when he sent the soul into her body and into the body of Toonahowi, had broken in twain an apple from the tree of life; and of it, half beats in this breast, and half in the breast of her whom I shall never see again. So true is this, that when I looked upon each other's face, we had no need for speech. I had learned much of her tongue, and she knew nothing of mine; but our hearts spoke always together as the birds speak in spring, when each knows the voice of the other.

"For a little time Toonahowi was mad, and knew not the truth. But after he had seen much of the greatness of the white men, he knew that this flower of theirs was not for him, and he longed more for his own home than a man dying in that desert

far to the west, beyond the great Mestachipi River, whence we once came, longs for water. He turned his back upon her and her beauty very gladly, my sister; and he came away to his own people to live his own life; never to forget her, always to remember her; and to be a better man thereby, a better friend, a better son, brother — yea, and a more wise and loving husband and father, to a wife and sons and daughters of his own blood.

“But none heard from Toonahowi speech concerning her. Even to the man Oglethorpe, upon whose bosom Toonahowi leans as upon the bosom of a father, when he brought me from her a kind farewell and the gift of this ring upon my finger — even to him Toonahowi said no word. To what end could he have spoken?”

Again fell silence, and the waiting Indians, who at every grave gesture had looked for an ending of the pow-wow, saw their queen raise her head with a movement of resolution, as she said:

“The white war-chief Oglethorpe is brave, and generous to reward. I love not the Spaniard, and would aid thy friend against him. I send to him with you, as you have asked, three score of my best fighting men, added to the two score he hath already. Would you, O brother of the strong heart and wise counsel, that one of these warriors be a white man? If it is so, I would have my brother to be pleased.”

“I do desire it,” returned the Indian gravely; and she answered in the same impassive fashion, “It shall be done.”

But after all the long ceremonials had been observed, and she lay alone in her own tent, she

who was Indian and chieftainess, but yet a woman, passed through the slow watches of the night, dry-eyed, waking, and shaken with a very terrible and silent grief, asking — as often before a woman has asked — what comfort to her thwarted heart was in the doing of this thing for honour's sake.

Yet the voice of honour did prevail with Alata, and on the morrow, just three days after Diana's departure, Toonahowi set out toward Savannah with the fair-haired white man.

They were a day's travel from Alata's town, when the white man turned to his Indian friend and asked whither they were bound.

"To Savannah, surely," replied Toonahowi. Then, after a quick, unnoted glance at the face before him, "To the general at St. Simons. I came up into this country to find one whom General Oglethorpe was very fain should be found, and my steps shall be swift to take you with me, to him who is as a father to Toonahowi and his Indians."

The white man, though Toonahowi had known him well in the old days, seemed, as the young chief himself would have said, a stranger to him now. "I do not go to Savannah," he answered briefly. "I will not meet with General Oglethorpe. And if you feel toward me the kindness which your action in this matter would seem to show, you may do me the one service to set me in a trail toward — toward the nearest port, Charles Town."

"The Indian is as a little child, my white brother," the young Creek answered him gently, "and as a foolish child, who ran forward trusting to have done much service. I love the man Oglethorpe, and

I had thought to bring him a gift for which his heart would thank me."

"Then," returned the other sombrely, "bring him not me."

"Whither would you go?" inquired Toonahowi, wistfully.

"To the coast," was the answer, "and overseas, and let no man know of your having met with me."

Toonahowi was travelling, with but a handful of the main party, down the Ocmulgee, having embarked upon it near its headwaters, about where Atlanta now is. The boat shot forward silently, and both men sat brooding long after this last speech.

"Brother," finally murmured the Indian, "thy book is too hard for Toonahowi to read. I will try no more to read it, but give thee farewell and set thee with thy face toward thy chosen trail, and with a heavy heart leave thee to thy wish, and tell no man of the matter. See, there the Traders' trail leaves the bank, a mile beyond this bend. The smaller rivers can be forded in this moon; across the Oconee there is ferryage; beyond that, here and there are the huts of the traders or of cattle-hunters, till one comes to the Tugaloo, on the Carolina line; and the land is at peace, so that none will molest thee."

And in the quiet afternoon he set his unwilling passenger ashore, and he and his Indians went on toward camp at a place in Newton County, afterward called Indian Spring, a point where traders from Savannah and Charles Town often camped.

Had it been Oglethorpe himself, all would have been different. Had it even been any white man,

as much esteemed as Toonahowi, explanations would have been offered and demanded. But the young Creek, though he had seen and respected the wife's devotion, and would have deemed her not deserving of abandonment and repudiation, yet could offer nothing, out of his own teachings, against such repudiation and abandonment at pleasure — and with no reason assigned — by a husband who was moved to the act.

His mission had been a failure — as to the personal aspect of it. He had meddled with that he understood not. He would meddle no more. He, and all his men, would forget that there had been any white man asked for — or found.

CHAPTER XV.

BLIND CHANCE

"He's laid him down 'neath her bower eaves,
An' slept till break o' day,
An' his luv' whose heart was sair for him
Wist not that there he lay;
But ca'ing up her merry men a',
To seek him she's away."

THERE was one small habitation in which Diana sojourned upon her wanderings that always after haunted her fancy with peculiar insistence.

It was well on into October. Little Return was cutting the last of his large teeth. He had thrived like a lusty weed in the outdoor life of boat and trail, bivouac and Indian village. But during the first day of their journey from Alata's place, which brought them to their boat, upon the waters of a little stream (tributary of that tributary of the Ocmulgee down which Toonahowi had moved with the fair-haired white man) there was a sudden return of midsummer weather, and he flagged and fretted with the heat. The two women took turns with Chunkey at holding and fanning the fevered baby, watching him with eyes of painful solicitude, and longing for rest and a cool, quiet spot in which to care for him.

Finally Lit said, "I know your mind, mistress, and that, having delayed this search so long, you are now in a desperate hurry; yet there is a place over northward — on an arm of the Amuchee, which flows into this stream — a traders' hut or shed. It stands high, and beneath great trees that would be cool. There we might stop and be away from the sun's glare on this water, that does make the poor babe fret so."

Diana was very willing to turn out of her course for the sake of the baby, and in the dusk of the evening they came rowing up the narrower river toward the spot which they had approached by devious and tedious waterways. They did not reach it till after nightfall, and found it an oblong hut with thick log walls, and a great thatch of sedge-grass bound with reeds, the whole front open to the river. Diana promised herself that here she would remain till the boy was quite recovered, which might be several days.

Little Return had fallen asleep, and Lit refused to have him wakened, but carried him on her breast up to the hut, of which they got brief and unsatisfactory glimpses by the flaring light of a pine torch. The two women crept about their narrow quarters and undressed themselves and the child in the dark, foregoing, for coolness' sake, the hot light of torches.

The things were brought up from the boat, and they were settling themselves with the infinity of small touches a woman, even on such a journey, gives to the room which affords her temporary lodgment, when Matthew Zubley, having talked with a group of Uchee Indians who were just leaving the place in a canoe, came hastening up the bank

waving his cap, Chunkey following close behind him.

Lit had seen poor Diana's heart wrung by so many false promises of hope, so many will-o'-the-wisp clues that she herself went out to meet him, shaking her head and motioning to him not to call Diana. "What is it?" she questioned in a low tone. "Do you think you have news?"

"It is certain," he averred, "that we are up with him. These men tell me that Toonahowi was seen coming down the Tallousee, and a white man with him, a man with long fair hair. O, 'tis certain, my good girl. Let me go past and tell Mistress Marshall of it. I am turning back with the men now to overtake Toonahowi, who, these Indians say, will camp this night on the Ocmulgee below where the creek of the Three Fawns empties into it."

"Nay, do not tell her," Lit urged. "Go on and find the man, and let that be telling enough."

Zubley, but half convinced, went back to his boat, and so, with a promise of extra pay to his tired rowers, made what speed he could to Toonahowi's camp, Chunkey going with him.

He was most graciously received. Toonahowi offered to wait that Diana's party might join him, and they go on down the Ocmulgee together, for that it joined the Oconee some hundred and fifty miles below to form the Altamaha, which would take them direct to St. Simons Island, and General Oglethorpe.

"You know her errand, I think," Zubley said, "and perhaps you can guess why I am here."

The Indian looked at him with grave inquiry.

"I was told," Zubley said, "that you went to the

town of Queen Alata to find a white man who was there; that you did find this man, and that he came down the river with you, a fair man with yellow hair; but I think I might have been misinformed; for surely, if he is in your camp you would have made haste to tell me."

"Yes," returned the young chief. "There is no white man in my camp. If there were, I should certainly have told you."

"Is it not true, then," Zubley urged, "that you were looking for this man, and that you brought him so far with you?"

Toonahowi looked at his interlocutor, and his heart was torn.

"'Tis on Mistress Marshall's behalf that I ask," pursued Zubley, "she whom you saw searching for her husband at St. Simons Island."

The Indian turned away as though to take counsel with himself, walked a step or two apart, and stood with bent head in the darkness. Finally he came back. "I went into the country of the Upper Creeks, and found a white man," he said; "so far you are right." A long pause, then he raised his head and looked with sad eyes at the man before him. "My errand was a failure," he added, "it was a failure — ask me no more."

Zubley was nonplussed. He saw the Indian's good-will and distress, and yet the matter wore a most puzzling face. "I am glad I did not tell Mistress Marshall of my hopes in this case," he said.

The Indian regarded him gravely. "What I could do, I have done," he said. "Ask me no more."

"I will bid you farewell, sir," Zubley returned,

"and go back to my charges, whom I left alone, to come upon this wild-goose chase."

They were getting into the canoes, disheartened and distressed, but with fresh rowers with whom Toonahowi had supplied Zubley, when they missed Chunkey. They halted a moment, calling; and out of the darkness the girl came running down to the boat. She was in a state of deep excitement. Her Creek ancestry had served her well. She had bought, with some trinkets Diana gave her, a word or two of information from one of the Indians in Toonahowi's party.

"It is true," she told Zubley, "there was a white man, and he turned off above, at the crossing of the big Traders' trail, taking its eastward bend, for Charles Town."

"Good!" cried Zubley. "All is not lost. I will go back and rouse her, and now I will tell her that he is surely near at hand."

After the boat was gone, the two women settled down to sleep. There came a gentle downpour of rain, which cooled the air. Diana, wakened sometime in the deep night by a little stir or murmur on the part of her child, heard the drops falling on the thatch above her head, a soft, beneficent shower, that dropped from the eaves with a liquid, lispings noise, and set the sleepy birds to stirring in the trees outside.

The white man who had left Toonahowi's company was walking along through that shower, unutterably footsore and heartsore, longing only for rest and sleep and to escape all questionings. Toonahowi had given him this hut as the first stage on his pilgrimage, and now he welcomed its uncertain

outlines as he saw it, a blur of blacker blackness against the sky.

Entering the lower end of it, since he saw the upper rooms or pens were occupied, he threw himself upon a pile of rushes and was soon asleep, the deep and dreamless sleep that follows exhaustion of body or mind, and in his case there had been both. In that very dark hour before dawn, while the weary man still lay locked in a slumber as stirless as death itself, Zubley and his men came back.

"I am only bold enough to wake you, madam," he said, "because I really think Lieutenant Marshall is near at hand. We must set off at once, and up this river three miles we come upon a trail. Where it crosses will be a ferry, and the ferryman can surely tell us if he hath set your husband over (which I think will be the case) and that within a few hours."

Once more the hurried preparations in the dark; this time dressing and packing, where before it had been undressing and unpacking. The approaching dawn made, of wall and rude couch, objects dimly conjectured. Once more the sleepy child was roused, made ready, and taken upon Lit's shoulder.

All the way up the little river, Return had been promised that when they got to the pretty house where they would stay, he should go out and pick flowers, as he had at Ebenezer. Now, as they stumbled down to the periagua in the dark, he raised his head and murmured sleepily, "We most dot to 'at pitty house, muvver? I do det some f'owers for ee booful farver?"

The rowers, whose keen, trained eyes could see some actualities in the palpitating dusk about them, pulled away with a will, and soon the little hut,

where the fair white man still lay sleeping, was left far behind.

From the hopeless quest upon which Diana now set out, she reaped no worse results than repeated disappointments; for the baby rallied sturdily from his little skirmish with the big teeth, and once more waxed and throve. He could never understand that the "pitty itty house und' de big t'ees" had been reached and passed in his sleep, and continually prattled of the sweet place which they were soon to come to, and of the flowers he would pick there.

And many a time when Diana lay down at night, in a forest camp, or some Indian's or trader's hut, she fancied she heard again the murmur of the rain on the thatch, its lisp below the eaves, of that deserted habitation in which she had lain, but which she had never seen.

CHAPTER XVI.

OUTSIDE THE FENCE

"WHEN I was a babe, and a little babe,
Stood at my mither's knee;
Nae witch nor warlock did unfauld
The death I was to dree.
Nane tauld o' the lands I would travel in,
Or where my grave wad be."

AGNES had said in the early flush of her abandonment to an overmastering passion, that it was better to be crushed and broken, under the kingly foot of Love than to grow, an unnoticed weed, in the garden of the world.

Still in the belief that her sufferings for Cameron's sake were creditable to her, that they set her apart from her kind, and somewhat above them, she had followed the man to Charles Town. Not having been trodden upon sufficiently aforetime, when Cameron courted her as an heiress, and left her promptly on finding that her father's money would never be allowed to line his pockets, she quitted Diana's home and came north.

She found her lover, as the Agneses of this world are apt to find its Camerons, with one foot (figuratively) on the deck of a bark which was to carry him to the West Indies, where he had plans a-gate which promised him much money. Yet, when she

came, as one might say, plucking his embarking sleeve, because he really cared for the woman, because such devotion as hers was the one thing which he would have been willing to answer or reward, he told her — over his departing shoulder, as it were — to wait for his return, and that he would surely be with her in three months. They arranged a name under which she was to ask for letters at the post — but no address was given her to which she might write. The one thing was safe to do; but the other might have had results — for she would certainly have written.

On this slender ground of hope she sat down in Charles Town to await Cameron's return. She possessed less money than she should have had, or than would be needed to exist, however humbly, for three months, since she had refused Diana's offer to pay her quarter's allowance without reference to her sudden departure. Now she could have found it in her fainting heart to regret an action which had served only to wound one who had shown her naught save kindness; and her fears counselled her that the few pounds she there lost lowered her store to a sum which, unreplenished, must necessarily be spent long and long before she saw Archibald Cameron's face again.

She took first a humble lodging, and kept much within doors. She missed cruelly the daily activities of her life at Chaters House. She lived on cannily little — Scotchwoman that she was — husbanding her poor store. She avoided her own church and pastor, and everything that would have "placed" her, brought her standing, credit, and later, when she needed it, well-paid, ladylike employment.

Archie would be back so very soon, it was not worth while — and she did not want it to be known that he, Archibald Tavis MacHeath Cameron, wedded a poor sempstress, cast off by her rich father.

When the three months passed with no word from Cameron, and her funds running desperately low, she changed from her first location to a cheaper, and from that, when she was at her last pound, to a poor hut in a disreputable quarter among the human waveson of a seafaring population. It was not till this time that she made an attempt to obtain some work to eke out her scanty store. Had she done so when her surroundings though poor were decent, she might readily have found employment as sempstress or teacher. But out of her present habitation, she could not issue to ask aught from her own class. She preferred to find such pitifully paid shreds of sewing as might be had among the women, her neighbours, who had not even the wealth we associate with vice.

Three of these, a big Englishwoman, Jane Shumway, and two companions, Meg and Poll, — for whom Agnes never knew any other names, — who lived together in a hut next hers, took her in some sort under their protection. They were good-hearted creatures, and it appealed to them in their degradation to have such a woman as Agnes — a lady, and one whose life was above reproach — dependent upon them.

There was an uneasy wind abroad under a black, night sky at Charles Town. It was the nineteenth of March, 1743, and such an evening as makes people say that they wish it would storm and have

done. The hushed footstep of the hot wind bred an unutterable longing for the welcome patter of rain.

Agnes, alone in her hut, looked down at her small, knotted brown hands, lying before her — empty. The forefinger of the left was honeycombed with needle-pricks, set there in these past few months. The last groat was gone — the last stick of furniture from her miserable room. As for more work, Meg and Poll and Jane Shumway, having found a party of their friends bound for a junket, and fain to adorn their festivities with the presence of ladies, were away with them to Port Royal. She might have gone to one of the great houses up-town and asked work — or alms. When she thought of it her face burned; a woman in rags, coming from this quarter of the town, what reception could she expect?

She had haunted the post, begging for a letter from Cameron, till the man who waited upon her finally asked her testily not to come unless a vessel were in — seeing that she expected no missive save one from overseas. Suddenly, as she looked at her tremulous fingers and realised that she was very hungry, a great shivering came upon her. Was this the end? Despair foreclosed the mortgage he holds from the first on some natures, and she answered her own query. Surely it was the end.

To beg, to steal, to humiliate herself a little further, and feed the fire of life, meant also to nourish this monster of misery which had hold upon her heart. Cameron would never come. Her father had turned his back upon her. The world was wide, and there were very many people in it; but out of the millions, there was but one man for

her — and he was denied her. Out of all the space which homes take, there was but one bit of ground which she could claim — that in which a grave might be digged.

At thought of her grave, came up the sights and sounds of the Christmas fair at Savannah. Again she saw the rheumy eyes of the old Highlandman as he told her that her grave would not be in the kirkyard.

That meant the sea. Yes, she would go home to the sea. Out of it had come all that old Farfrae MacBain owned; beside it, a child, she had played; across it come to follow her faithless lover; now to it at last — and there an end. She had seen the Seer often since coming to Charles Town. He peddled simples and charms upon the street.

She got upon her feet, so weak that she could scarcely stand, and crept out. Passing the hut where Jane and her two companions lived, she looked eagerly for a light, but there was none. Once before, when she was ill, the three poor souls had kept her in the necessities of life, forbearing, that they might do so, many a debauch, and demanding such help as they could from the men who were their companions. The degradation of that support had been such that she had declared to herself with weak tears, when enough recovered to realise it, that Farfrae MacBain's child should have perished before she received it. Now, with the grim Fact confronting her, she prayed that one of them might be returned — that she need not die just yet — that she might have one more chance to ask for Cameron's letter.

Nay, there would never be a letter for her; there was no need to palter — as well go now.

Man, who passes through so many changes before the last great change, who makes so often his sorrowful meat of his attained desire, ought never to be astonished at the mutations of time. That Agnes MacBain, who had walked her maidenhood through with demure pace straitly regulated by the ankle-chains of propriety, should come at the last to look hungrily for the candle in a poor drab's window, as to the light of her salvation — such a thing was, surely, tribute to Time — that gamester of the loaded dice, who in the end bests us all.

For we grow as we must in this field where we are set; yet the wheat will still be cursing the tares that they are tares, and the tares recriminating the wheat that it is wheat. Some even think shame upon the redness of the poppies; till comes the tread of the reaper, the swing of the scythe; and wheat, and tares, and poppies — are but harvest. Close behind poor Agnes's self-righteous steps sounded now the sibilation of that scythe which would lay her low, that her grave be made with the outcast.

She was on the wharf. Before her lay the harbour, with its few vessels and fishing-boats. One of the best had come in from Glasgow but yesterday — she knew it for one of her father's ships. But what she did not know was that on that ship was a lawyer's clerk from Glasgow, looking for one Mistress Agnes MacBain, whose personality had been merged in that of starving Agnes of Glasgow.

From the south was coming her father's ship *Godolphin* — her ship now, since that father had died intestate — and upon it Archibald Tavis Mac-

Heath Cameron, who, the tidings having reached him, was pushing on as fast as wind and tide could take him to wed the woman whom he would have chosen out of all the earth, had his choice been left unfettered, the woman who now would bring him a mighty fortune, in his favourite wealth of ships and shipping.

The ship that rode at uneasy anchorage in the gusty night was hers, hers many another as good, speeding now upon far seas to bring profit to one who should never receive it nor know of it. She turned silently from the sight. An undersized, faint-hearted looking woman, there was a mighty power of persistence in her meagre frame; but she had come to the end of it. The fire was burned out. The breath which fluttered on her lips was the breath of a dying woman, when she turned without having heard any sound at all, and found behind her, looking over her shoulder, the old Highlandman, seer, vendor of simples, and of most evil repute.

She drew back with a faint cry, and made to pass him. The old man plucked off his bonnet with a show of courtesy, "Can I help you?" he asked.

"Help! — from you?" breathed Agnes, with a crawling o. the flesh at him, as at something uncanny. "Nay!" she burst out, melted to sudden speech by contact with a listener, "there is none can help me — now. I want no help. Stay! Did you not deal in herbs — drugs — when I saw you last? I have — There is — My face hath a most lamentable ache — can you not give me something? — something powerful — for I tell you the pain is

more than I can bear. Can you not give me that which will still it?"

She looked eagerly at him — and he regarded her rags in silence.

"I must have it," she went on feverishly. "What! — you fear you will not be paid — you halt on that? Well, I have nothing — I —"

"'Tis a dangerous matter, — a thing for which a man should be well paid," the other began craftily. "You would not go to any of the shops asking for just what you want," he added, meaningly.

"Give me your clasp-knife," cried Agnes with sudden resolution. "Nay, never blench and waver, man. I will not slay myself here before you with it — nor turn its point upon you. See," and she shook down the masses of her pale brown hair, that hung like a long waveless curtain about her head, and down each side of the little pallid face, making a strange, ghastly picture. "Will that not pay you?"

The knife was produced, and with the man's help the hair was rudely severed. "I shall not need it," sighed Agnes — "my head is easier with the losing of it."

Then, as the man proffered a root, and told her how to brew a tea of it, she cried jealously, "How am I to know that it will — cure me? Do I dare to trust you? You would never deceive a poor soul come to her last, as I am?"

"Aye — the root is what you want," the old man assured her. "It will ease your pain." And she went away, back to her hut, clutching the packet to her breast.

A week later, when Agnes's three neighbours disembarked at the wharf, they met, as by chance,

but in reality because he had been looking for them, the old Scotch vendor of herbs. To Jane Shumway, in the lead as usual, he spoke a low word, and she set off up the hill running. Meg and Poll wondering somewhat, called a friendly epithet or two after her, and turned in to a public-house to refresh themselves.

A little later, they came trooping up the street singing, bearing between them a jug of flip. Jane should share in their merry-making, even if she had shown an unfriendly spirit in hearkening to the auld herb-seller and skeltering out for home alone.

They burst open the door and tramped in gaily. Jane raised her tear-disfigured countenance from the bed, where she lay face down.

"Ye huzzy," roared Poll genially, "runnin' home afore your mates — and drunk a' ready!" she added enviously — "drunk, as I'm an honest wummun. Whence had ye the liquor? We were bringin' ye the flip."

"I'm no drunk," sobbed Jane, sinking back on the bed. "I wusht I worr. Agnes 's Gleskie's dead!"

"Dead, say you?" echoed Poll in a curious falling voice, setting the flip jug down by the fireside. "Dead?"

"Aye," choked Jane. "She'm dead and buried, this sennight. I would I had bided at home. I would I had axed her, ere we went, how all fared wi' her. Oh, wummun, wummun, she worr as honest as the governor's lady — as th' queen hersel' — an' she perished for a dirty farding's worth o' bread!"

"Did she starve?" questioned Meg in a hushed voice.

"Nay, she was like to starve — an' she took th' short way — as happen we'll most on us do. They'm putt her outside th' kirkyard pale for't," she added with a shudder.

The two women sat down and stared at her, the jug of flip on the floor between them. To those who live as did these poor creatures, death is the ultimate evil, the thought of which is to be drowned in any fashion. The passing out of one of their number is apt to be accompanied and followed by frenzied scenes of repentance and remorse among those left behind.

"A good wumman," muttered Poll. "I never seed her th' worse for liquor in all the time I knowed her."

"An' us drunk as dogs, when we can come by th' money for to buy it!" chimed in Meg, fiercely. "Look at us, and our lives — an' look at her! O God! O God! I wusht it was me that was dead an' in my grave an' at peace — I do — I do — I do!" Her voice rose, upon the last repetition, to a shriek, and she fell to keening.

Poll's shaking foot went out and kicked over the flip jug.

"Now why in th' good God's name did ye that?" moaned Jane querulously from the bed. "Happen we'll need a drop o' comfort bitterly ere we win through the night — grief's dry work — an' we spend no more for drink this day; for I ha' set ma' heart that we mun buy th' poor soul that's gone a headstone — Poll, gi' ower that sound, or I'll go mad an' brain ye!"

A comparing of half-empty pockets ensued; a handful of copper was gathered, and the three decided that a stone-cutter whom they knew would furnish them a marker for the amount — small as it was.

"Come, Meg," coaxed big English Jane, of the red-haired Irish girl, "you be th' schollard, do ee write it out fair for us — leave th' keening, lass; you'll ha' me to bury soon, too, an' y' dunnot — an' write out plain what sud go on th' stane."

And it so fell out that, as they knew no other name for her, "Agnes of Glasgow" was all that was set above the grave of Farfrae MacBain's daughter.

In his small, wretched shop, the old Scotchman stood weighing out a drug to a customer. The two or three dusty shelves above his head bore a strange clutter of musty books, bottles, packets, or roots and dried herbs, broken household ware, and other trumpery suggesting in part a junk-shop, a vendor of second-hand books, or, as was his principal calling, a dealer in drugs and simples. The woman who was purchasing from him was fresh-faced and comely, a fish vendor, or fish-fag, from the harbour near by. Suddenly the door darkened, and Archibald Cameron entered.

"Good-day, MacMurtrie," said the newcomer, and when the old man looked up with a startled catch of the breath at this open use of his name, Cameron added, "I took you for Angus MacMurtrie. Am I mistaken?"

"Right enough," returned the old man, in a wheedling tone. "And what can I do to serve

Captain Cameron the day? Is it the old business?" he added hardily, and leered at the man before him, as though to intimate that he was not to be outdone in plain speaking.

"The old business? — oh!" Cameron stared at him. "No, it is a new business, for me. I am looking — I am searching — for a lady."

The woman who had been buying the bundle of sarsaparilla and dried artichoke roots paused open-mouthed, as though she would fain inquire what old Angus MacMurtrie could know of any lady. "I beg your pardon, sir," she said civilly, as both men glanced at her, and seemed disinclined for further talk in her presence. "What like was the lady? and where did she bide? I see a mort o' folks, peddling my fish."

The suggestion seemed to Cameron not amiss; and he answered her with feverish haste, and in detail. "It is Mistress Agnes MacBain I am looking for. She was my betrothed; a delicate maid, a handsome young woman. She could have walked under your arm; and little hands and feet like a fairy, she had. Old Farfrae MacBain's daughter she is, that owns the *Godolphin*, just in — I came in her myself, and brought letters. MacBain is dead, and we are looking for his heiress. I have searched this town high and low, and found naught of her, though I left — though she was here, and I saw her, scarce six months gone."

He moved restlessly to the counter, as the woman shook her head. So imposing a personage as he described had not come in her way. At the door, she stopped and looked back.

"'Tis a sad word to say," she hesitated, "to a

happy lover a-seeking of his lass; and yet, sir, I do say it to all who have left friends in Charles Town before the fever ran so bad; and that is — ha' ye looked in the churchyards?"

She went out, and Cameron, turning, stared moodily at his own hand lying upon the counter. It was tremulous; and he raised bloodshot eyes to the old Scotchman's face, and asked huskily, "Can you give me something to make me sleep, old man? I have been in great anxiety of late, and I — Sleep hath forsook my pillow; or if I do drop off, I have most gruesome dreams — of her."

There was a long silence, MacMurtrie making no move to produce the drug for which the other asked. Finally, with his eyes fixed on Cameron — those strange eyes, vague yet piercing — he said, "Well, ye looked, and ye did na' find her in the kirkyard."

"How do you know I looked?" Cameron objected fretfully. "Well, I looked, then. It was surely good luck not to find her there. If she is living, she is faithful to me; that I know."

"Aye, if she is living," the old man echoed. "But Erchie — Erchie Cameron — ha' ye looked *outside the kirkyard?*"

"Outside it!" Cameron's eyes roved fiercely to the end of the counter, as though he would have sprung past it and been at the other's throat. "She was not the kind of woman to be buried outside the kirkyard. I tell you, old fool, she was my betrothed, and the best woman in the world."

MacMurtrie smiled, and when he did so his face was dreadful to see. "Ou, aye," he said with a sort of silent chuckle. "The clairgy — of whom I was once a glowing and unappreciated ornyment

— have two sins for which they deny a puir body hallowed ground. Best go look outside the pale.”

Cameron dropped weakly into a chair and sat with his elbows upon the counter, his face hidden in his hands. “She took her owr life,” he said finally. “’Tis that you would be hinting.”

“Nay,” returned the old man with Scotch caution, “I did na’ say it. I said they may have thought so, and thus laid her outside. And I said to you, to see for yourself.”

Cameron raised a haggard face that had grown even paler and more drawn than before. “I know, MacMurtrie,” he said, “that you are in league with the devil. Did you know, when you gave her the drug, who she was, and what she was to me?”

The old man turned aside, to hide a smile at this tribute to his powers. In truth, he had known nothing whatever of Agnes’s antecedents or affairs, and merely guessed at them now. When he found Cameron, who had formerly given him a small commission now and again in the way of spy’s work for the Spanish, looking for an Agnes, whose father was Farfrae MacBain of Glasgow, indeed the guess was not a difficult one.

“What!” he said, with pretended indignation, “because I am an old man, and have gotten an ill reputation in one way or another among the Pharisees, will you turn in and hint that I gave her that which caused her death? I tell ye, Archibald Cameron, ’twas not I.”

The look of prophecy spread itself over his old, mean, sordid features: the gray eyes filmed; he shook his lean forefinger at the figure that leaned half-cowering upon the counter before him. “Thou

art the man!" he whispered. "'Twas for your sake. I can see her, with your name on her lips, at the last. 'Twas for your sake, Archibald Cameron, that she died. And now, come, man, come. I will go with you. Let us look upon your completed work. Let us see her grave."

Cameron rose without a word. The shop was closed, and the two, amid the shadows of the falling day, went upward into the town.

There, outside the palings of St. Philip's churchyard, the old man found and showed to his companion that stone which the three women had raised above her that was gone. And across its top Archibald Cameron read the words, "Agnes of Glasgow," the date but five days earlier.

He stood long staring down at it that the other touched his arm, and bade him come away.

"I tell you," he said, turning fiercely upon the old man as though he had spoken, "I did love her. I never cared for any woman else. I was coming back to her."

"Aye," said MacMurtrie, "you were coming back to her — since that her father was dead, and she had a gey fine fortune to her."

Cameron did not deny that his return had been hastened by news of Farfrae MacBain's death, intestate.

"Young beauties," he went on moodily, "what are they? Bound for to have a man ever on his knees to them. This was a woman to make a man's fireside bright for him. This was a woman to make a man comfortable."

"Come," urged MacMurtrie, "come back to the shop. Have you any business for me this trip?"

Or were you too greatly taken up wi' your schemes o' weddin' the Gleskie ships to bring me aught?"

Cameron went with him some paces from the grave, turned, and looked back over his shoulder, first at the humble stone, and then at the great church beyond. "Curses on the Pharisees and hypocrites," he said, "that put such a woman as my Agnes outside the pale. I will lift her from where she lies, and build her a tomb worthy of her virtues."

Old MacMurtrie grinned. "And wi' whose money will ye do all that, my mon?" he inquired sardonically. He had grown wonderfully familiar as his knowledge of the other's affairs increased. "You forget, my fine bird, you have na' the Mac-Bain millions to work on. Best let her lie where she is. She sleeps weel eneugh. And for you and me, my captain, 'tis more matter where the next meal comes from.

"And to think," he added reminiscently, "that I tow'd her, as long ago as when I saw her in Savannah, that she would lie outside the kirkyard!"

CHAPTER XVII.

ALEXANDER BUCCLEUGH IS CALLED

“‘WHA is it ca’s i’ the mirk, mirk nicht?
Wha speirs o’ me wheer fludes be pouring?’
He saw nae mune, an’ nae stern licht,
But he heard the water kelpie roaring.”

TRUE to his promise, old Dad brought Weeping Moon up to Toonahowi’s town, and there delivered her, with all her dowry of horses and cattle, and indeed much added thereto of household gear, clothing, and ornaments.

All this was done without prejudice to the friendship between these Creeks and Dad; for the Creek custom in such matters was exactly this. The man who, not liking a wife, or wearying of her, sent her back to her people, was entirely within his rights. If she were a chief’s daughter, who carried dowry with her instead of being herself in a manner bought, and the retiring husband restored this dowry or its equivalent, he was held to be most magnanimous. And Dad resigned formally those princely cessions of lands the Creeks had given him along with Weeping Moon. He was then to rejoin Oglethorpe’s forces in the south, where he could be most valuable.

Diana and her boy were at Wynnnewoode. Ogle-

thorpe was to sail for England in July; Sir Paris had been with Matthew Zubley at Savannah, making all the necessary preparations for him, Diana and the child to go at the same time, and for an indefinite stay, leaving Zubley in charge.

It was well into March. In the beginning of the year 1743, Oglethorpe had been warned of another intended invasion by the Spanish, and had taken prompt measures to repel it. On the sixth of the month, pursuing his avowed policy, to strike first and strike hard, he had made his brilliant, bold, and successful attack upon a party of Spaniards, at Fort Diego, and followed it up with so aggressive and intrepid a demonstration against Augustine itself that the Spaniard drew back in dismay. Now, the general was pushing forward as rapidly as possible the repairing and strengthening of the fortifications on St. Simons and the other islands, preparatory to returning to England to answer the infamous charges of the renegade Cook.

The belief was strong upon Diana that her husband would not be found in the colony — not in America. And she had resolved to spend her last shilling, if need be, to find and ransom him, wherever Spain might have put him. It was believed that her personal intercession might assist this investigation. For this were they going to England.

General Oglethorpe was mostly at Frederica. Tillsford had gone immediately from Darien to Savannah, and taken his wife from there home to Charles Town. Old Dad was very earnest that Lit should accompany Diana to England, and go to his kin in Scotland, the which she stoutly resisted.

Upon the twentieth of March, a strange, gray,

lowering day, more like a southern September, Lit and her father started in a small periagua down to Savannah from Yamacraw. It was a broadish boat, with one pair of oars, and these they pulled sitting side by side on the central thwart. A mile out from Yamacraw, Dad resumed his arguments in favour of her going home to Scotland.

"I tell you, Dad," she said finally, "I am ashamed to go back there among all the fine people —" She choked, crimsoning darkly; then it came out with a rush — "Me, that's half Indian — and can't read nor write."

The old man bent an inscrutable face to the oar. He was shamed to the soul by this arraignment which the girl had meant for no arraignment at all. "Life," he said, finally, "is a game of Abel-whack-ets. We play our cards with some mighty braggings; and he is a sorry poltroon who claims — when the whacket falls to him — that Fate hath loaded her knotted kerchief most unfairly with a leaden pellet. Yet it does whack me most unmercifully, Lit, to tell ye the bare truth — I have lied so long. Your mother, my poor lass, was none other than Jean Dalkeith — Hold, there! Don't drop your oar! Why, Lit, you'll have us in the water!"

But Lit was weeping wildly, the oar drawn in and flung down dripping in the bottom of the boat. "O, Dad!" she sobbed. "Why did you ever do me a cruelty like that?"

"Was it cruel?" he questioned. "Yea, I'm an old brute to ask that. Yet I began it in a jest; and then there was Salequah, who had an Indian to his mother, and I could never bear to set you up above

him, Lit. The last time that I had a mind to tell ye of it was when the boy lay dead; and even then, though I knew myself a sorry old dog not to do it, I couldna' quite get the words out."

Through Lit's head ran jumbled thoughts of all that this might mean to her in the future; of the justifying her love for Diana and the baby. And oh, Bennerworth — her Francie! She need not burn and quail inwardly at thought of him, of his love for her. She was fit for him. With a father highly descended, university-bred like Frank's own, and a lady born, for her mother, even her poor ignorance could not disgrace him.

"And as for the reading," old Dad went on, "'tis a black, cruel shame, lass, that a man college taught, and with some pride in his knowledge as I had, should bring you to that. But never mind; we'll mend it, we'll mend it, Jean."

"Jean?" echoed the girl swiftly, and her father nodded.

"She gave you her own name," he said, "but always called you 'little lass,' and so from that 'Lit,' and I, too, after she was gone, not liking to hear the name of Jean, putting it by with all the trinkets of her, and striving to forget it."

Lit, a new thought in her eyes, looked hungrily in her father's face for a time. After all, he was the only comrade she had ever known, and at last she faltered:

"If I could read, I've got a letter here, father, from one — well, I may as well out with it — from a lad that loves me, and that I think a heap of. I could not bear even that Mistress Diana should read it to me; for, Dad, he — he drinks, or he did

drink; and he went away to the northward to make a man of himself, he said, and show me that he could down the drink devil for my sake. Now, Dad, he has wrote me this here letter. He was away for my sake when he wrote it, and if so be my poor Frank has failed, and is writing and saying hard things of himself, why, I could not bear that any eyes but mine should see it."

(Ah, what eyes to read the tale of a man's faults — great, tender, dark doe's-eyes, deep-fringed, and merry, and passionately tender.)

He reached forth his hand silently. "You'll never mind your old Dad, Lit. Why, lass, we were ever full partners, and for drink —" He breathed a half-bitter little laugh.

She took the packet from her bosom, gave it to him, and sat hungry-eyed while he read it, watching like a poor dumb animal-mother whose helpless young lie in the hands of even a loving outsider.

"Why, thank God!" cried the old man, lifting his glance to the open sky, which began to be filled with crowding, rushing, ragged-edged black clouds.

"What? — what? —" queried Lit eagerly.

"'Tis Bennerworth," he said.

"Aye, 'tis Francie," she assented.

"And he is doing well; he has written to his father in England, he tells you; and his father is fain to have him bring home a daughter such as you would be; he will be back by now to claim you — so that is arranged."

"Nay, Dad," she cut in jealously, "I am no man's daughter but yours. Why, what will you do without me? And you've given back the land, too — you, who were a kind of king, with all your

great plantations and cattle and horses. O Dad! what is it you're planning for to do?"

He smiled an odd, inexplicable smile. "Back to the sea, lass, back to the sea," he answered her. "It ever calls a man who hath once belonged to it."

"Dad!" cried Lit suddenly, looking about them in dismay, "do you know that we're in for a great storm? Let's put to land."

"Why, yes," the old man answered her, "a great storm 'twill be, I think, and I would best land you."

"Land me!" the girl echoed, "but you go with me, or I go not at all."

They had ceased to row, trusting only to the current, and this, as though augmented by a cloud-burst above, grew momentarily swifter. As they shot down the seething tide, their small craft rocking and shuddering, the old man seemed to take no more thought of the danger than as if he were a child rocking upon his mother's bosom. His head sank upon his breast, his mighty beard blew back in the warm, wet wind like smoke wreaths.

"I don't know why," he said, after a long silence, "I can't see why I remember my brother so well in this hour. Not my brother as I came at last to call him and believe him, a dour, smug-faced prig; but what he really was when we were little lads together. I can see the burn where we used to go wading and swimming and fishing — though why fishing, the Lord he knows, for no fish were there. A pretty stream, with willows over it, or all in among the heather — I can see it a great deal clearer than I can see this green hell's-broth boiling around us. This is a desolate land. I can see the two little lads, naked, wading under the willows, laughing

and splashing the water on each other — aye, and fighting a bit, when I would be bound to go first and have the best of it, as was ever my way."

The wind had become terrific, and it set from the sea, bearing up waves against them as it fought the current which carried them forward. Lit had been back in the boat's stern to fetch a coat. Now she crawled on her knees to where her father sat. "Dad!" she cried out, clinging to his shoulder, and shaking him gently, "we might yet work in to land if we both use the oars. Come, let's try it."

"Yea, God," he went on, apparently without hearing her, "'tis what we all are — naed children fighting in the water, the unfirm current beneath us, naught between us and the Seeing Eye; and there is solid footing nowhere — and naught remains — but all slips away — away — away."

"Dad!" entreated the girl, "will ye take an oar and help me? See, we can still land."

They were now in the channel between Hutchinson's Island and Savannah. They could see the town up on its bluff; but no help was to be expected thence. The landing must be made, if at all, on the bit of beach at the bluff's foot.

"Why, yes, my lass, I will put you off here; I will help you."

"No!" she screamed, "not me, not me! *Both or neither*, Dad!"

"Na, na, lass," he urged, "'tis Savannah, where ye were going. And lasses be best indoors in such weather. It looks as though it might be rough, after awhile."

She shook her head at him despairingly, and crouched silent in the boat which swept irregularly

forward, on around and between the small islands below the town. Buckaloo had taken an oar in his skilled hand, and Lit and he worked with might and main. They came squarely upon the point on the mainland south of the upper end of what is now Elba Island. Lit sprang out, grasped the boat, and cried to him to follow.

He reached his oar toward the beach and sought to push off. "Nay, lass," he said, "do not keep me; I think I am sent for." And as the boat's end was dragged from her grasp, Lit sprang, fell, and scrambled into it, cutting her cheek so that it bled. Entirely hopeless now, she took up her oar once more, and faced the storm.

"We'll never win through, Dad," she said softly. "We'll never win through in this world. I'd not thought to die. But I — I cannot leave you, Dad. We'll e'en bide it together."

It was a wild, pale-green tempest that had come raging up the coast from Florida, such a storm as rarely falls in the vernal equinox, in fury rivaling those which make the autumn equinox dreaded as "the hurricane season." Great vaporous puffs of livid mist drove in from the sea like evil birds, and the little periagua rode it out alone in that hell of tortured waters, the wrecked sky whirling above them, wreck and ruin of the storm all about them.

"And who was I," the old man went on, quietly, "to set mysel' against my brother? A good fellow in his way, though his way was not mine. 'Twas a daft streak in me that I must quit the love of our childhood, and turn upon him and call him hound and interloper, because he was my elder. Who was

I that I couldna' bear the common unjust lot the younger brother? — and 'twasna' his fault."

His eye rested on Lit, and he addressed her in a quiet, natural tone.

"Now, lass, I ha' had a letter. See, I wrote him of you and that you were Dad's daughter." He sought in his breast for the paper, and Lit, believing that, where she was going, all letters would be unavailing, said, "Never mind it, Dad; not now."

But he drew it out and gave it to her, and she took it and put it in her room — a letter from a lone old man in Scotland, who longed to have her with him.

They were once more sitting together in the middle of the boat. "I wish, Dad," she said wistfully, when she saw him so strangely calm, "that you would tell me of my mother."

"Nay," he answered her uneasily, "I am very fain to speak of something else to you. At times like this, when there's a storm, or I have been drinking, I have a trick of seeing her, like a dream, d'y' mind? or a wraith as it might be, out there," and he pointed forward into the obscurity toward which they were travelling.

Just as Tybee the storm increased terrifically, he sat with her back to it, though not attempting to do so, since her father would not pull the oar he had

She looked over her shoulder at the raging sea of livid sky and livid water, the screaming wind lashing between them.

But whether the frail boat was sucked down like a rag of wet paper into the trough of the sea, or rode like a cork upon the wave crests, the old man's face was calm. He sat now in the stern steering,

his eyes searching the gloom ahead as though they quested for those who had, as he said, sent for him.

Suddenly one of the black waves, which here began to roll mountain high toward them, seemed to burst before it reached the boat. A great watery hand, it grasped the periagua and drew it backward as a boy draws back his arm to fling a pebble. Then, as though the tempest said, "Not her, you!" it divided the missile in its grasp, dropped boat and man, and swept Lit free of the little craft, and well up on the mainland. She had scarce touched the beach when another great wind-tortured wave, driven at furious speed, boiled up under her, raised her high in air, carried her past the natural bank, and, favoured by the mad wind's pushing shoulder, cast her far inland, letting her sink with scarce a shock of impact, receding along the naked course, leaving the girl lying in momentary unconsciousness.

Deprived of her weight, which had been hanging upon one side of it, the boat righted itself, and rode out the sudden shock.

Old Dad sat in its stern steering, facing now the open ocean. He was singing to himself, calling and answering those whom he heard call to him. His great black eyes were smiling softly up into the mad storm; his cloud of beard and hair, blown and lifted about him, gave him the look of a storm spirit.

And so he passed on to his own place, as he would have wished to go, back to the sea indeed.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A SEA GIFT

"THE ship drave east, the ship drave west,
By many a comely strand;
At length a blast o' the wastlin' wind
Did blaw him to the land."

THE Isle of Hope is an inland island, though upon every hand are rumours of the sea. To the east Skidaway and Wassaw fend the open Atlantic from its shores, with Skidaway River running between; and it is only cut off from the mainland by a marshy creek. Even the Skidaway, broad and deep as it is, does not reach the ocean itself, but empties into Ossabaw Sound, whose channel, choked with tiny islands, is more quiet than the surrounding waters.

But the fierce tempest which swept yelling up the Georgia coast on that night when Alexander Bucleugh, being sent for, rode in his frail craft out to meet those who called him, troubled even the calm of Wynnewoode.

Diana had come back from her last expedition, disheartened if not despairing. She had said — in the opening of her search — that she would never give up so long as there were cities to interrogate, forests to pierce, or wilds to importune. Now there

were unguarded moments when she began to realise how it might feel to be a widow — the baby fatherless.

Despite these secret lapses, her plans were bravely made to go with Sir Paris to England. It seemed to be agreed in all quarters that Robert was not in the New World. If Spain had him still, there was prospect of ransom. If he had been secretly executed, or had died in captivity, Diana was beginning to long for the sad peace such knowledge would bring her.

Sir Paris had been ill, and these three remnants of the Caters family were gathered now at Wynne-woode for farewell, before he and his niece took ship for England. Hastie's stern nature was quite melted with looking on at Diana's pathetic and bootless quest for the lost.

"I envy you," she had written, when the young wife was leaving for St. Simons. "I was longer in coming to my senses than you; yet when I found that the break between Ulysses and myself was all of my own making, I did follow him to this country, believing that where your father was, he would be found. You know how vain it all was. Except for being where I am more independent than I would be at home — so far as any chance of finding Ulysses is concerned — I might as well be in Devonshire as in Georgia."

The three sat late together talking. Something in the storm stimulated them all. Even Return had to be bought to go to his little bed, by repeated stories which his uncle told him of seafaring folk, and what such a storm as this might mean to them.

After they were all retired and the house was

still — so far as sounds of human occupancy go — the gale increased in fury. It was a savage, petulant, gusty, changing wind, which whirled and snatched and thrust about and about, never setting steadily in any one direction. It pushed and dragged and plucked at the house like snatching fingers, making as though it would have lifted it by the eaves. It gathered up the pebbles from the walks below and carried them against walls and windows, as though some one without were giving a signal, calling upon those within to waken and come forth.

So painfully did this feeling of being needed press upon the heart of the mistress of the house that she threw a dressing-gown over her night-robe and stole down to the drawing-room. There she found one candle burning on the table, and Diana going from casement to casement, peering out into the windy dark, and listening to those strange, creaking, straining, groaning sounds, which a tempest will often bring with it.

The two women turned with a little smile of indulgence, each for the weakness of the other, and met Sir Paris hurrying down the stairs.

"My dears," he said, "'tis no use for a man who belongs to a seagoing family to essay sleep on such a night as this. I could have sworn I heard voices and orders shouted as a ship's master shouts to his seamen, when that last heavy blow went past the house."

The windows were all closed. The gale outside tried at their fastenings like a living thing. As the three pale-faced people confronted each other, there came again that rending, cracking sound, and

above it another, that was, as Sir Paris had said, very like to human voices.

Diana was shivering, and Hastie wrote upon her slate, "Come, my dear, let us go up to where the boy is. Should he wake in such a storm, he would be frightened."

When Diana said to her uncle that they were going up, he answered that it was better to do so; for his part, he thought he should dress completely and lie down on the settle, since he believed it possible that a boat of some tonnage had been carried past in the Skidaway and wrecked, and he was very fain to be out with the first peep of dawn.

The unusual disturbance in the night caused Diana to sleep late. The tempest went down about four o'clock; and it was broad day, with the sun pouring in at her window, when she awakened and found Return's bed forsaken beside her. The house seemed strangely silent and empty below stairs, and she dressed hastily and hurried down. Hastie and Sir Paris were at their breakfast in the morning-room. "Come, Diana," her uncle called, "we have gotten past the wonder of it: Return is gone over already, for to make a nearer investigation. Do but look, my niece, and see what a tempest was abroad last night."

Diana gazed from the drawing-room window across the lawns, shrubberies, and intervening hedges to where the Skidaway, swollen big by water driven in from sea, spread from meadow to meadow and far toward the house. There in the midst of it lay a tall ship, her long, tapering masts slanting obliquely against the sky, indicating that she was aground.

The tempest had lifted the ship and the waters about it, and carried them up the channel of the Skidaway. Then, when the wind's palm, pressed flat against it, ceased to hold the invading ocean banked about the strange newcomer, and the tide went rushing out, it left the big ship canted, aground, almost as strangely out of place as though on a city street.

"It was true then!" Diana cried. "We did hear the shouting and the voices last night. Do you tell me that Return has gone over there?" They could see the sailors moving about the stranded deck, and Diana, who could eat no breakfast for interest in the matter, professed her own intention of following immediately.

"The young man took a bucket of fresh water — the servants were all going down with water and fruit, for we heard at dawn that there were sick men aboard, and a lack of both these. So Master Return took him his silver cup and the bucket that he filched from the cook, and is now away with the others to relieve their necessities."

As they stood looking out, they saw a tall soldier with a group of other men — servants and one or two sailors — following him, leave the ship and come up the lawn. As he neared the window, Sir Paris put up his glass with a sudden exclamation, and turned toward Hastie.

But Hastie was out of the room and running across the hall toward that side entrance which the men from the ship were approaching. The two listeners both heard a strange cry, beginning in a voice like that of the boy when it veers between childish treble and scarce established bass. "Ulys-

ses! — Ulysses!" — and after the cry, a man's full, heavy tones, mingling with those strange broken accents.

Sir Paris, half-way to the door, turned back. "It is your Uncle Ulysses," he said to Diana. "It can be no other, since Hastie has found her voice to speak to him. But, dear, they have fifteen years of explanations to make to each other, and we will wait here until they come to us."

There was not long to wait. In what seemed a very few moments, Hastie, such as her niece had never seen her, came running in, clinging to the arm of the tall man in blue, and crying in that strange uncertain voice, which was almost as though its mechanism had rusted in these years of disuse, and now creaked and protested:

"O Paris, my dear brother! see who has come back — come back to me who did not deserve so much from Heaven!"

After the explanations and greetings which showed Ulysses that this stately and beautiful woman was the baby Diana whom he had kissed good-bye some eighteen years before, Sir Paris suggested, glancing at the neglected breakfast-table, "Do not wanderers always return hungry?"

"This wanderer has so returned," Ulysses answered. "My ship is canted in such wise that to make a fire in the cook's galley is impossible —"

"And you have not breakfasted?" asked Hastie. "Come sit thee down, and we will keep you company, for none of us I think has eaten anything."

It was a memorable meal, broken with tears and laughter, full of loving speeches which began, "Do you remember?" or "I have never forgotten."

"And what, my brother," Sir Paris inquired, "brought you to these waters in the season of the vernal equinox? 'Twas a mad thing to do — and, by that same token, most like you."

"Why, I bear letters of marque, and have been taking of a Spanish ship which was carrying prisoners to Spain. Thank God, I rescued thus a round score of our poor fellows from the Spaniard's rapacious maw, who had already suffered no little of his cruelty."

Diana trembled with an agony of hope and fear; and no other tongue was able to form one word of inquiry. Finally, "Robert Marshall!" she articulated, barely above her breath.

"Robert Marshall?" Ulysses seemed not to have noticed who it was that had spoken the name, nor to consider what its significance might be. "I have a letter —" He was searching in his pocket as he spoke, and unobservant of those about him, across whose faces a shock had passed. "I have a letter — to — his —" went on the bluff, unconscious sailor.

Diana sat, pale to the lips, breathing with difficulty, and hanging upon his speech like one expecting sentence of death. The strain was so unbearable that Sir Paris half rose, and Hastie put out a hand toward her young cousin, though the eyes of neither left Ulysses's face.

"A letter to his widow," Ulysses concluded, before anything could be done — though what could they have attempted, with Diana sitting there, listening? When it was too late to try, Sir Paris, with a glance at Diana's pale smitten face, sank back in his seat with a sigh that was almost a groan. Hastie

withdrew her outstretched hand and covered her face with it; and they let him go on in serene unconsciousness.

"A letter for his widow," Ulysses repeated, bringing out the packet and laying it on the table before him, "and now I think of it, 'tis addressed to her at Chaters House. The missive came to me, with money and valuables taken from the prisoners by their Spanish captors; and I judge the gentleman died after the voyage was begun, for none of my prisoners answers to that name; and as you see, 'tis addressed to his widow."

Diana clutched it without a word. And then for the first time Ulysses took note of the deathly silence of his kinspeople, and their white faces.

"She was his wife," Hastie whispered to her cousin. "With all the other news, we had not told you that. A most sweet youth, and the poor child has been seeking of him ever since that he was lost in the attack on Augustine, now nearing three years ago."

Diana had gone to the window. There she read upon the outside of the package. "To the widow of Robert Marshall," recognised the handwriting and cried out that it was indeed he. "'Tis Robert's hand that wrote it. O uncle! No need to go to England now. He hath gone to a further country — where no king can ransom him. And he never knew how much I loved him!"

The letter itself was not long, but it contained will which devised all of his estate in Virginia to his dearly beloved wife, Diana Marshall. It was the letter of a young and ardent man, yet the e

presence of one acquainted with grief, and grown patient of life's crosses. It read thus:—

“ON BOARD THE SPANISH BARQUE *Adelantado*.
Twelve Leagues (As we guess) from the
Floridian coast. March 11th, 1743.

“MY HONOURED WIFE:—It seems fit that I
should write these Lines, as every day threatens
that I may not be Vouchsafed another in which to
do so.

“I have now been a Fortnight in the possession
of the Spaniard, having been taken by a flying War
party of Spanish Indians while I was making my
way from the inland Mountains to the Coast, and
carried by them in haste to the Commandante at
Augustine, who was then most Urgent to have some
English Officers for Exchange. Now, Don Antonio
Barba having shortly expired of his Wounds while
in captivity at Frederica, I have daily reason given
me to believe that I shall not be permitted long to
Survive him.

“This being so, My Dear and Honoured Madam,
I desire, ere I go hence, to take Measures that you
should know my mind toward yourself.

“When we parted, I had laid the reins upon the
neck of my Pride, resentment, and self-sufficiency;
and to my present thinking, I made but a poor and
unmanly Figure in that matter. Even before I
chose to feel myself Aggrieved for that I was not
loved, (who had deemed me most warmly Delighted
in,) I bore no Inconsiderable part toward my own
undoing, with the which — when the Event was
come — I freely blamed thee.

“From the first, I was too intent upon thy Beauty,

and mine own delight therein, too apt to see thy fitness for being Loved and my own bent to love thee, to Question as I should have done aught which seemed beyond Reason in your sudden passion for myself. Had I loved thee more truly and singly, my Sister, surely I had seen thy Distress and fathomed thy plight.

"Had not death stepped in to cut the knot for us, I should now have gone to some Foreign Power and offered a sword, so that the embarrassments of one, whom I shall always love with Constancy, might be abated.

"Many a time, Beloved, when I looked to come alive out of this War, I have lain on the Tented Field, in the forest, or upon some uneasy deck, and vexed Sleep from mine eyes with the questioning of why Diana could not love me, to whom others had not been unkind, and who needs must waste upon her (to whom it was Offence) a love which grew with Distance and Estrangement. And out of the darkness, dear heart, came always the Answer, that I, of all men, dare not seek her, since that I could not bear she should bend her proud neck to a Chain of my forging; that she should let Prudence, or the advice of elders, push her toward the feigning of a Complaisance which she deemed my due as a husband. A husband's Right! Ah, fond, foolish, doting that I am, who would be to you an Adored Lover or naught — to offer me the burning insult of a husband's Right!

"And so, love, because that I am still thy Incorrigible Lover, I would, had not this thing chanced, have spared thee my unwelcome Presence. And

since it is come, I go (on thy account) the more willingly.

"Always, beloved, in Life or in Death, thine only,
"ROBERT."

Diana read it through with dry, anguished eyes; then thrust it into her bosom, and laid the will in Sir Paris's hands.

"There, dear heart," she said, "take that and let me go — let me away awhile, until I learn to face it. Everybody will say — that I should have known it long ago. But I did not; I have hoped and hoped, and hoped against hope."

She looked so white and frozen — there were no tears — and moved so blindly, swaying and staggering, that Hastie, with a swift instinct for what was best, cried: "Bring the child to her!"

"Nay," answered Diana, straightening her tall figure bravely, "I will go to him — alone — alone. Do you all stay here, and let me hence to him alone. I will be better so."

So they drew back and let her pass. She went out, across the lawn, and down toward the place where the ship's people and those who ministered to them were gathered. She paused finally on a little knoll that overlooked the river, and stood under Hastie's great live-oaks, looking down at the tall vessel aground in the Skidaway, a few sailors in their blue watchet running over its rigging or moving across its slanting decks.

She walked forward in that maze of anguished incredulity which always follows — for a time — upon the receiving of a blinding and unexpected blow. Here, then, was the end of her hopes, the

end which she had always refused to look upon as a possibility. She stood now, trying to beat down her brave heart to accept such a doom; but, as it seemed to her, without success. Why, what would life hold without her quest, her expectation? cried that bleeding heart.

In what fires of anguish had been forged the anchor of that hope, the which she had dragged up from the pit of her despair! She had made it so strong in those dreadful days at Sapelo, because she felt she could not live with less. Clinging to it, she had searched for him almost the whole face of Georgia, and down into the very stronghold of the enemy — Augustine itself. With a constant and undeviating mind, courage indomitable, and hope inextinguishable, with resources of cheer that were as exhaustless as Nature's own stores, she had led her little train through all the creeks and inlets of these low-set, sedgy islands of the Georgian coast; and inland, along streams and rivers, and by wild trails, up into the wind-grieved hills and mountain fastnesses where Creek and Cherokee and Choctaw dwelt. The forest-ways and water-ways of the whole region had been haunted by this pathetic little group: The square-faced, kindly, practical, protecting Dutchman; the strong dark beauty of Lit; their silent, faithful Indian rowers and bearers, chosen from among Lit's own people; and always leading them and showing them the way, this love like a lamp, this wonderful figure of mother and child.

The tall, fair woman with the calm, maternal face, and great, wistful, seeking eyes, her baby on her breast, went where a mailed warrior had been

in deadly peril. The Providence whose wing is stretched above the heads of little children protected her.

She had made head against all bodily weakness and spiritual shrinking; she had breasted difficulties like a brave swimmer. Refusing to admit impossibilities, she had despised danger, smiled upon privation and hardship, saying to weariness, "Thou art my sister," and to hindrance and difficulty, "Thou art my chosen companions and counsellors." And she had met disappointment upon disappointment, failure after failure, with an invincible faith, and an undismayed and unconquered front.

And this hope, this courage and faith, which obstacles could not daunt nor disappointment quench, had here met their mark. Here was the end; here the line, drawn by the Mighty Finger, beyond which the highest faith and courage and strength were even as the feeblest unfaith and fear and weakness, since nothing could avail.

The event which she had said could never be — was here. It had been true long since. It had been already thus, when she dragged her weariness from hope defeated to faith denied. And that weaker twin which is born at birth to the strongest soul, began to whisper wailingly in her ear and counsel her to despair, so that she longed only to have her baby's head over her breaking heart. Ah, to hold him close, close; to feel his living limbs, to kiss his rosy face, since it was all that was left her now of a love which came too late!

She lifted her eyes, and sent a questing look down past the group at the water's edge, to the ship's deck. At the moment, a boat from the grounded

vessel touched shore, and there sprang from it a tall, athletic man, who leaped lightly up the slope, with a step and bearing which made Diana's heart stand still.

What was that upon his shoulder? A child — her child — Return. A great mass of tangled golden curls blew about the uncovered head clasped by the child's little arm, mingling with the flaxy gold of Return's tresses so that one could not have told hair from hair.

He bounded eagerly up the slope. And now the child spied his mother, and pointed her out, and his little treble pipe challenged her in words she could not distinguish. The man's face, which had been bent to the hill, was lifted upon her an instant; then he had reached her, set the babe down, and with the same movement dropped on one knee. And Robert's eyes, deep, ardent, appealing, looked up into hers as he cried, the little face held against his own:

"Mistress Marshall — O Diana — heart's treasure — whose child is this? Diana — Diana! *Whose child?*"

"Thine, Robert! O Robert, we are yours if you will have us!" and she was sobbing and smiling in his arms. The heart that she had thought stilled in death was beating beneath her cheek, and Robert's kisses were on her lips and eyes and hair.

This was a man, who held and kissed and smiled upon her. The handsome lad, the impulsive boy, had, under the stress of a crowded life, and through fires of pain and grief and disappointment, amid the hardships, perils, and loneliness of war and captivity among savages, come into a heritage of

manhood. It was a new Robert who had come back to the new Diana. The dimples only showed now when he smiled. The skin of infantine fairness had been tanned by the sun and wind. The blue eyes were deep and grave. The lower face, that had been so dimpled and smiling, was now moulded into lines of power and resolution, with a cast of sadness that was inevitable.

During those years that he lived in Alata's village Nature had been his companion; upon her large, impersonal kindness he had leaned. And whosoever lives long upon terms of daily intimacy with the face of earth, admits nature and her creatures to his confidence, holds discourse with the winds, and takes the sunshine as counsellor, must learn patience and largeness of view.

Whosoever looks on at the operation of elemental forces, unhurrying unstaying, unhating yet implacable; notes how the winds carry with equal hand the beneficent seed or the dreaded pestilence; how the waters flow alike to feed life or to destroy it; how the sun which brings the seed to germinate, hurries the dead thing to decay; must come to see that the Great Plan has but one animating force — love; and that it has nowhere room or use for little resentments, rancours, and bitternesses.

"My darling," said Robert, after the first transport of joy and amazement had somewhat quieted, "of all the things which I have guessed or dreamed in my many, many dreams of you, this thing I never thought of. To come home, and find you waiting for me — and with this treasure, this pearl of love!"

"Nay, dearest," Diana whispered, "I have not waited at home. I have searched every village and

settlement in the colony. I have been to Augustine itself, and to Creek Town, far up on the Coweta, searching for you."

Robert's face changed colour as she spoke. "When were you in Alata's country?" he asked, eagerly.

"It was the last journey," Diana answered him, "and its failure, more than everything that had gone before it, broke my heart. For, O Robert! I had felt so sure, that time. We were there eight weeks ago, in midsummer."

"And so was I, dear heart, had you but known it!" her husband told her. "Unless perchance I had gone upon an embassy to the Back Enemy; for when I did set out upon that journey — with a most heavy heart — I drew rein and gazed back, and beheld a company of people going in to the town. Would it not be strange if there we looked upon each other and knew it not?"

"We did," Diana answered him, "ours was the company. I looked and saw your horse in the mountain trail up through the opposite defile; and for some reason which I knew not, my heart sank at the sight."

"And the queen denied me to you. It was Toonahowi's importunities that freed me. Yet, your visit having been kept from me, I knew nothing of your mind, or of this sweet babe, and I had not the heart to return to you, to present the painful problem to you afresh." They smiled upon each other, and kissed, in token that their problem was solved.

"Come, love, we must go to the others; I know their hearts are bleeding for my grief," said Diana.

And when the three went back to the house, Return riding upon the shoulder of his "booful farver," carrying still his little silver cup, they were received as we would receive one who, having been fondly loved, bitterly mourned, deeply, intensely yearned after, had returned to us from the dead.

Ulysses would, with the sailor's bluff directness, have asked the newcomer why, when he found himself upon an English ship, whose commander was Ulysses Chaters, he did not make his own name known. But Sir Paris, when the conversation verged toward such a query, adroitly drew his brother aside and said to him:

"We be bachelor men, you and I, Ulysses. One of us will not very long remain so, as I am thinking," and he cast a humourous glance toward Hastie. "As for the other, having been born a bachelor, he looks to die one; and there be many things in the affairs of married persons into which a bachelor should not inquire too straitly. It appears that our nephew, Robert Marshall, was a most devoted husband, and took the utmost pains to bequeath all his estate to his beloved wife in case of his death; and yet that when that death failed to take place, he showed no disposition to avail himself of the opportunity to return to her, and even allowed the letter and will to fall into her hands which would persuade her of his decease. If now he seems most monstrously delighted that his plans have miscarried, and the family been reunited, methinks it were best we ask no questions, but take a good thing as we find it."

"Aye, and right thankfully, my sage philosopher — right thankfully," responded Ulysses, glancing

across at Hastie's face, so softened and beautified by the light of happiness.

There now came in to this miraculously reunited group Francis Bennerworth, but a few days returned from the north, and who, having been over across the island at early daybreak looking for strayed cattle, had found Lit and brought her in. She was pale and shaken, but something of the old strong-hearted Lit remained, for she told of her father's passing without a tear.

"It is the way he would have chosen to go," she said — "it is the way he did choose. I cannot bear to think of his growing old and feeble — him that loved so to rule by the strength of his arm. You know, mistress," turning to Diana, "the heart has been gone out of him since Salequah's death."

The baby here found Lit, and precipitated himself upon her, crying out that he had found his "booful farver" all by himself, and brought him home. "I div'd him a dink out 'e' cup, 'nen he comed wif me."

"It was even so," Marshall confirmed him, laughing. "I was lying on the deck where some of the sick men had been put that they might enjoy the sunshine. Comes this young man, cup in hand, giving everybody to drink. I saw first my father's name and my grandfather's on the one side of it; then I turned it and saw my own, with the most welcome command, 'Return,' written above it — 'Return Robert Marshall,' said my little basin to me. It was a message I never hoped to get, and therefore, one may say, never deserved."

"Aye, Lit," Diana smiled, sitting down beside the half-perished girl, and taking her hand, "and

what, think you, was his first word to me? He brings the boy in his arms, and asks whose child is it?"

Lit laughed with the ghost of her old sauciness. "'Tis what no other living creature will ask who sees them side by side," she said, patting the baby's round cheek fondly. "'Tis what our little lad will sure never have the face to ask his mirror."

Hastie was making use of that newly found voice of hers to question Robert in regard to his captivity. Sir Paris and Ulysses drew near to hear the answer. Lit, leaning forward, said whisperingly to Diana, "O mistress! I have somewhat to tell you and Francis."

Diana had acted as mediator between these two, had plead Frank Bennerworth's cause when Lit seemed like to cast him aside, and had made what headway she could against that strange unwillingness the girl developed, when it appeared patent to all that Bennerworth was on the road to make a man of himself. The two felt her presence was no check; rather, it brought to the surface a thing which Lit would have told her lover before, but for physical weakness and its resultant confusion of mind.

"O Francie! O both of you, my dears!" she cried, stretching a hand to each, while tears ran down her brown, beautiful cheeks. "I dare love ye both now, as much as I list—and that's a plenty! See, I'm white, like yourselves. I'm no half-breed squaw.—Jean Dalkeith's daughter, christened Jean, christened in a church, like any Christian of ye all! Dad told me so, ere he went. Why, what could my Francie have come to, a-mar-

rying of a half-breed squaw? And would I — that loved him — let him do that same? Not I, though my heart broke for it.

“But now,” with a return of her natural audacity, and a glowing glance at Bennerworth, “now that I know the good match I am, he’d better be speaking up brisk, or I’ll be asking of him to name the day.”

“Aye, do it!” cried Bennerworth, with the old reckless toss of the head; “do it — and I’ll name — yesterday!”

L'ENVOI!

"CHRIST died for alle. Forgie's our sins;
Forget our errors past.
For Christe's sake forgiveness make;
Bring us to him at last."

AS in nature, so in human affairs, there is a tide which has its flux and reflux, its time of going forth and its time of returning. As there are seasons in the solar year, so there are seasons in life's cycle; planting, seed-time; and harvest, the reaping-time, when that which is planted, that which sun and wind and rain have conspired to make grow, shall be reaped.

And of these seasons, neither is better, and neither is worse. We need not cry out upon the seed-time that we cannot garner sheaves therein; we are foolish if we reproach the day of harvest that it is fulfilment only, and mourn that the beauty of promise is not in it. These things must follow, in their order, strophe and antistrophe, or the grand hymn is not written.

The years of this history had been to the colony of Georgia the going out of the tide, the planting-time, the time of giving forth. And he who was the husbandman of that day, who established the colony in an alien land, and among a savage people, who took for his seed the poor and the outcast of earth, those, unhappy, upon whom fortune frowned, — Oglethorpe, — was not to see the harvest

The sowing had been generous. English debtors, French Huguenots, the German Salzburgers and Moravians, Jews, Quakers, persecuted for conscience' sake; Scotch Highlanders with their Lowland brethren; all abode for a time within its limits, and left their mark upon its harvest as though the field had been sown with varying seeds.

In 1743 Oglethorpe went home to England never to return to this cherished colony of his. He was still a young man in the vigorous plenitude of early middle age, and he lived to be very old. Active always in the affairs of his country, he won much distinction both as soldier and statesman. He lived to see the American colonies in revolt against England, and to decline a commission in the army sent over to quell that rebellion. A loving historian says of this that he refused to lend his aid to strike down the young colony he had rooted and fostered. If he considered England his mother, he regarded Georgia as his child.

The wife whom he married soon after his return from Georgia to permanent residence in England, leaves her tribute to his worth in a touching inscription upon his tomb; but the monument by which he is better known is hewn in the imperishable mountains and coasts of Georgia, and graven in that mark of selfless living which he set before the men of his generation.

The little lad, Salequah, untimely cut off from the land of the living, filled his small part in the planting for eternal harvest. The strong and wayward soul of Alexander Bucleugh learned, through being broken upon the wheel of anguish when this cherished child was torn from him, whether in fact

he desired to live an evil life or no. He found that the plans of the wicked are brought to nothing, and their spears are broken before the battle. He went to meet those who called him, a man purged of his faults, cleansed of unclean ideals, delivered from the fever of inordinate desires.

Lit's generous nature could bring her nothing but generous returns. The love she gave forth freely came back to her in like measure, pressed down and running over. The old man in Scotland who had longed to see Jean Dalkeith's daughter, lived to be comforted in his last years by Lit's bright face, her ready wit, her overflowing vitality. He clasped her little sunny rogues of Bennerworths upon his lonely old heart (what could the children of Lit and Francie Bennerworth be but sunny rogues?) and it was permanently warmed and consoled. He made her his heiress; and after he was gone, the old home in Georgia called her so strongly that she and her husband with their children came back to it, to make of it a home indeed.

Francis Bennerworth, when he ceased to put forth self-distrust and trembling and shame, found that manhood could be reaped only from other planting than these. The faults of his youth were unknown to his middle life, and the name he founded in the State of his choice is still an honoured one.

Agnes — poor, darkened child — what did she plant? Even that which she reaped — failure — dissolution. She set the hopes of her life upon an object which she knew to be unworthy; she saw her error and clave the closer to it; and her end was even as her beginning, and not different as the unthinking might say.

Archibald Cameron saw the sum of his desires just within his grasp, at the time when they were being most sharply withdrawn and denied to him. That he should have caused, indirectly, the death of the woman he loved, defeating at once her life and his own cherished hopes, was the natural and inevitable working out of such methods as he preferred.

Hastie, Sir Paris, and Ulysses Chaters lived long in this land of their adoption. Sir Paris, who had never seemed like a young man, did not appear to grow old with the years. A gentle, valetudinarian air grew upon him. He was fond of recondite reading; he cared a little less — he had never cared much — for the activities of life. That was all there was to the sunset of his days.

Hastie's voice resumed its wonted melody — but never, perhaps, quite the usual feminine fluency. She was ever a "Silent Lady" to the end of the chapter; but when she spoke at all, the words were worth hearing.

The sowing which Whitefield made in the colony of Georgia is yet being reaped. The orphanage at Bethesda still stands, a monument to this man who was a deacon in orders at twenty-two and a priest at twenty-three, giving the abilities of a richly dowered nature freely to the service of his God. And there, in later years, not only Francis Bennerworth, but Lit as well, when no regular preacher was to hand, taught and preached informally; that, as Lit said, the old Highlandman's prophecy might be made wholly good.

Toonahowi was not left long to garner his harvest of tears from that deathless passion of a lonely heart. Jones, Stephens, Harris, White — all Ogle-

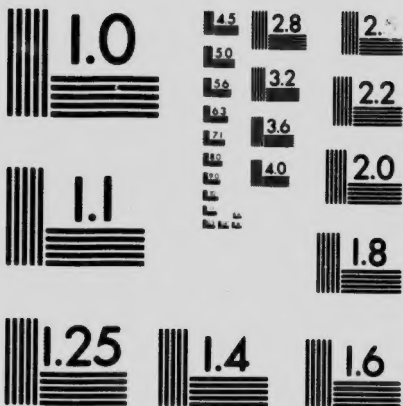
thorpe's and Georgia's historians, who preserve for us the story of that visit to London, in some cases enriched with a reproduction of the portrait of Toma-chi-chi and his young nephew painted at this time by Verilst (who, with probably the best intentions in the world, has certainly painted some of his own nationality into these dark faces). tell us also of the young Creek's death. He fell in the very year of Robert's return, fighting for his English brothers against the Yamassee Indians at Lake Francis di Papa.

He died in his young manhood; and she whose soul he had boldly claimed for his soul's twin may have lived to an old age, the head of a noble English family. Yet, we may hope that when these two spirits came once more into their native realm, where there is neither marrying nor giving in marriage, where none saith aught of Indian or white man, they found each other once more and were content.

Of Alata's after history, nothing is known. We are not told whether or no she led her people in battle, married a man of her own race, and bred up warriors for the chieftainship after her. The only trace that is left us of this strong soul, mocked by the dancing false light of a passion that was an ambition, an ambition that was a passion, is a great mound upon the bank of a North Georgia stream. Dwellers in the little town across the river call this sepulchral mound, "The grave of the Indian princess"; and investigators have found that she who lies there was in her lifetime called Alata Anawaqua.

Tall forest-trees grow above that breast, the





home of restless fires in its days of life. And underneath their shade, over its dust that is, O, so quiet and so consenting now, the school-children rendezvous of a summer Saturday, and little feet scamper and make quick retire, as the game goes.

Robert Marshall had made his life's planting impetuously; it had been rashly done, with a hasty and often ill-considered movement, yet the springs of action in him were truth and sincerity. He faced his errors honestly, perceived them, without bitterness as without glozing. And behold, to him a harvest of good; that sweetness from aloes, light and love from despair, which the old Highlandman had foreseen.

Diana (who began by sowing nettles) trod them down so nobly, though with bare and bleeding feet, flung the better seed into the furrow, generously and with unfailing hope, albeit now the season was late, accepted so humbly the tempest and useful trouble of the rain, that she earned the harvest of her fulfilled and happy womanhood. The adored mother of many sons — of a brave and generous line — this was the calling, this was the station, for which she was fitted, and the one to which she attained.

Little Return's sowings were all to make. How he fought for his country in its struggle for independence, how he added lustre to that name which he was proud to bear, belongs not to this history, which closes with his baby face looking from father to mother, one tiny hand stretched to each, drawing them together in the sacred unity of father, mother, and child — the most blessed trinity earth knows.

THE END.

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